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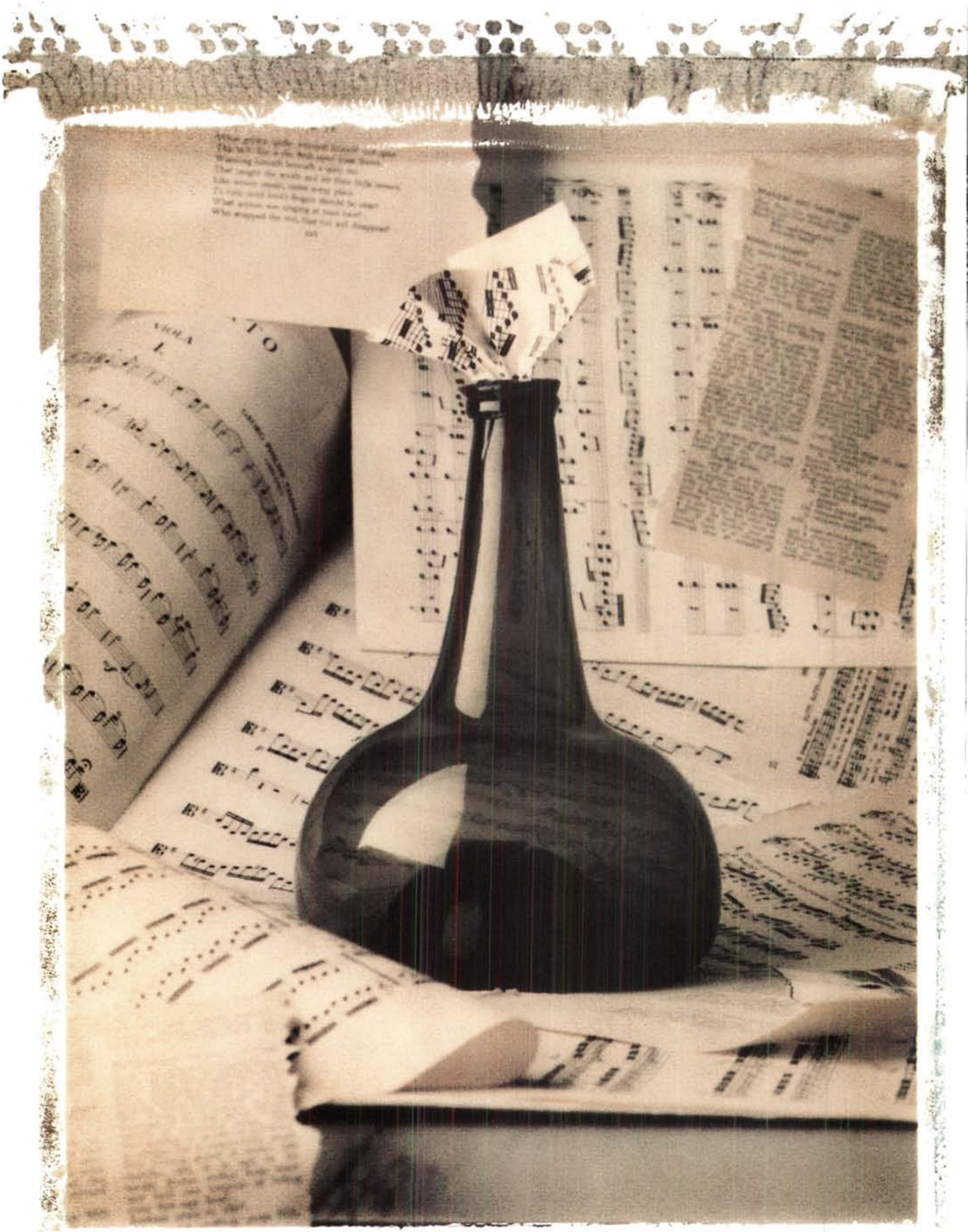

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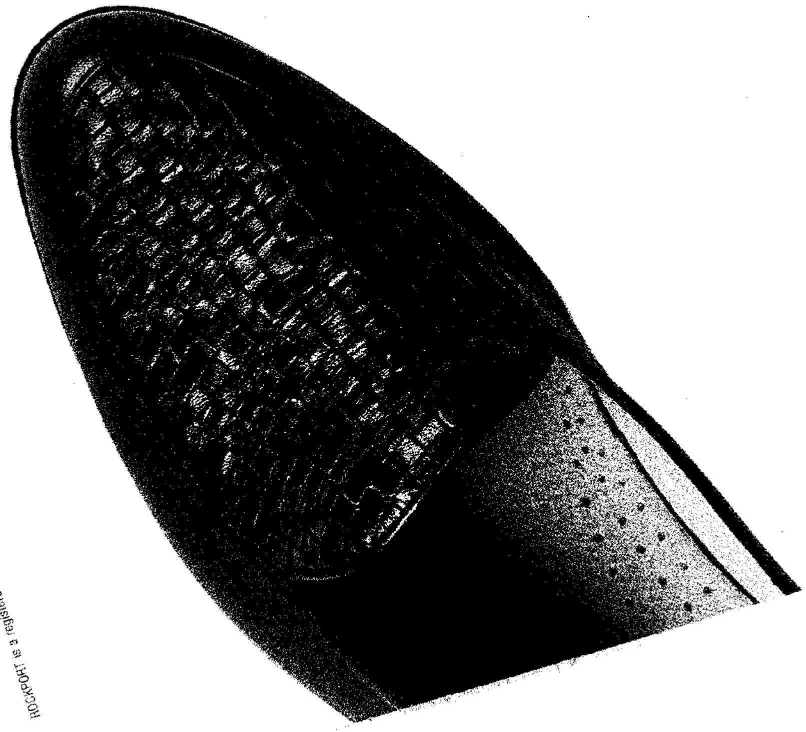

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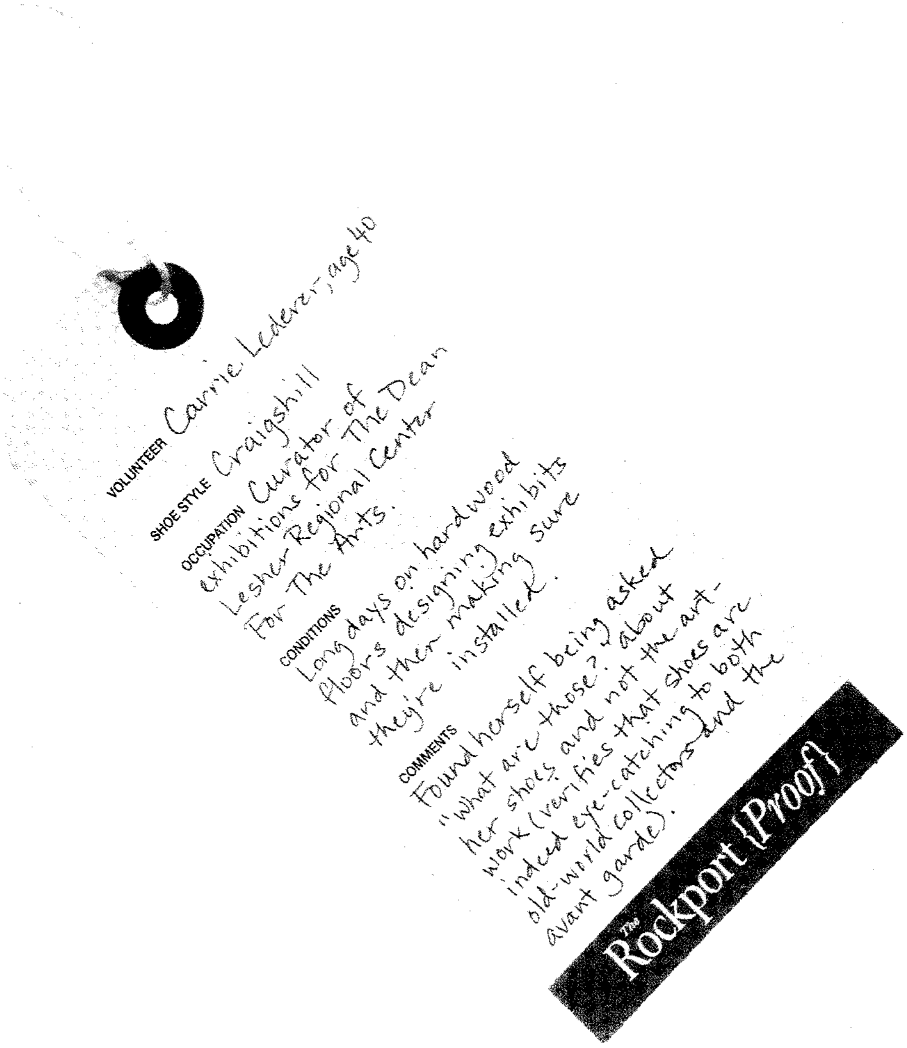

VOLUNTEER Carrie Lederer, age 40

SHOE STYLE Craigshill

OCCUPATION Curator of exhibitions for The Dean Lesher Regional Center For The Arts.

CONDITIONS Long days on hardwood floors designing exhibits and then making sure they're installed.

COMMENTS Found herself being asked "what are those?" about her shoes and not the art-work (verifies that shoes are indeed eye-catching to both old-world collectors and the avant garde).

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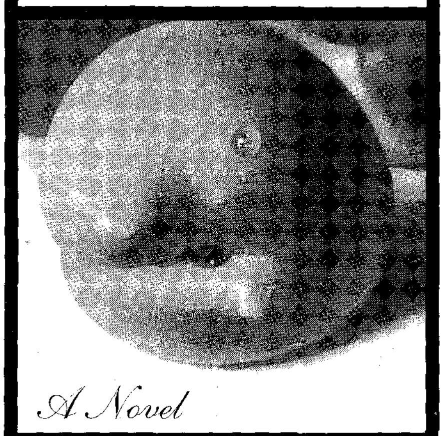

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APRIL 15, 1996

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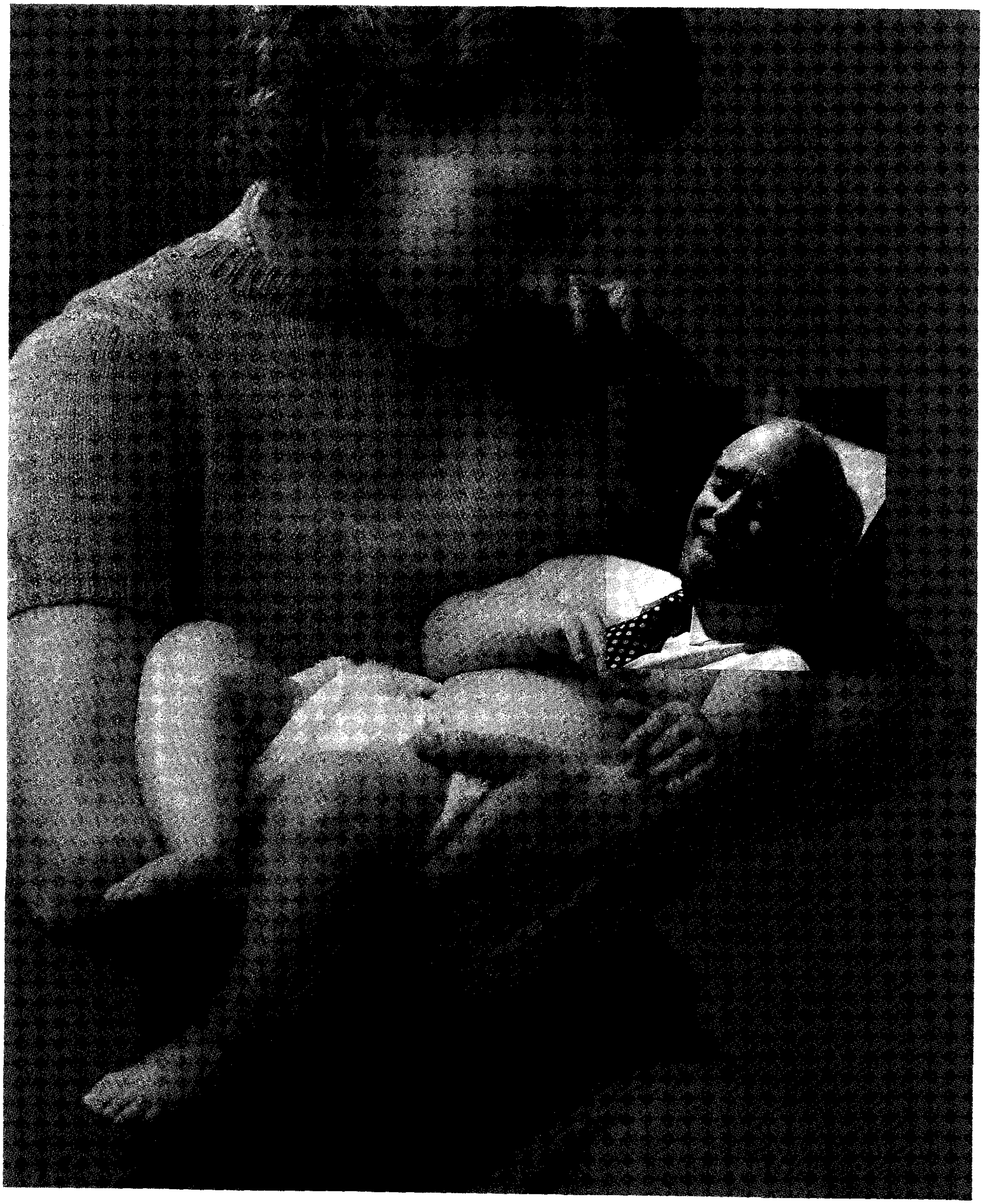

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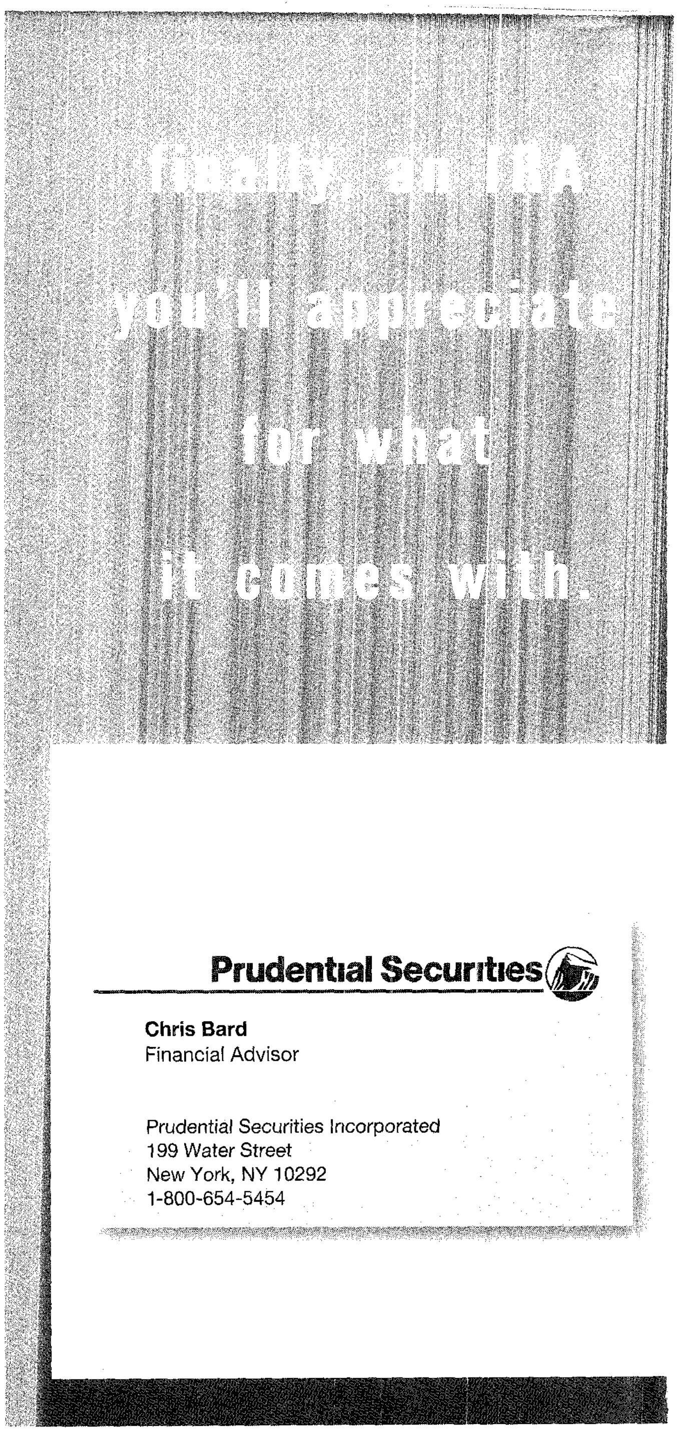

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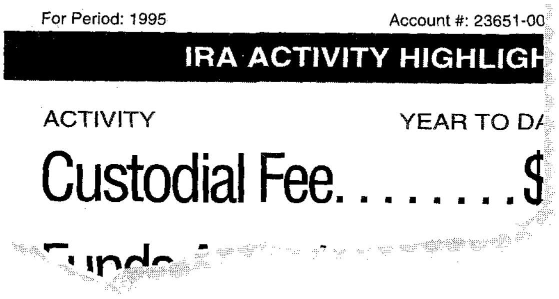

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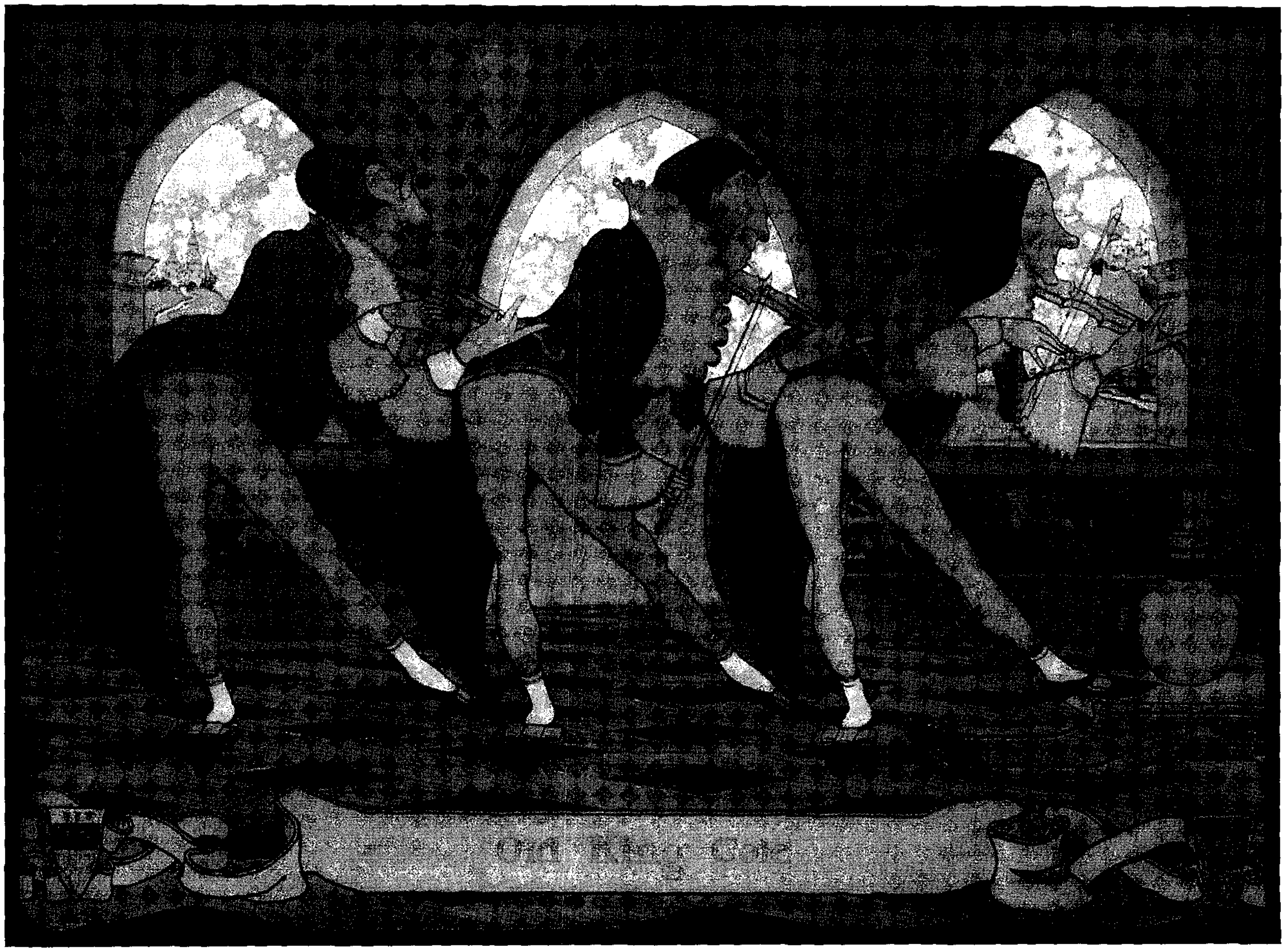

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Detail: Maxfield Parrish (1870-1961). *Old King Cole*, inscribed 'Painted for the Mask and Wig Club of the University of Pennsylvania by F. Maxfield Parrish, 1895' in shield lower right, oil on canvas. Estimate: $600,00-800,000.

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COMMENT

THE FIXER AS STATESMAN

Ron Brown and the perils of public service.

SILKY, shrewd, and supremely self-confident, Secretary of Commerce Ronald H. Brown was one of the premier Washington fixers of the modern era, and in recent months his friends had worried that the political consequences of some of his more dubious capers might be catching up with him. Now, of course, all that is being glossed over—but not, one hopes, to the extent of turning him into a plaster saint. Brown was valuable enough to his party and his country as the worldly, capable man he really was—an unabashed power broker with an abiding, and rather old-fashioned, dedication to public service. Last week, when he died, aged fifty-four, in a plane crash near Dubrovnik, he was on a mission entirely consistent with his career: leading a delegation of American corporate chieftains who hoped to do well by doing good—in this case, for the shattered economy of the former Yugoslavia.

Ron Brown's rise reflected both the immense social breakthroughs and the unbridled "go for it" ethos that, in almost equal measure, have dominated American life over the past thirty years. Although he was bred in the relative comfort of postwar bourgeois Harlem, his career was made possible by the achievements of the civil-rights movement. Not a protester himself, he climbed the ladder as a black "first"—the first to be admitted to a fraternity at Middlebury College, the first to serve as an officer in his Army unit, the first to head a national political party. As a young staffer at the National Urban League, he learned, under the tutelage of Vernon Jordan, to navigate the rapids of Washington's overwhelmingly white unelected government of lobbyists, lawyers, and fund-raisers. While the likes of Carl Stokes (who died, of natural causes, the same day Brown's plane went missing) and Andrew Young were winning power at the ballot box, Brown followed the less glamorous but equally influential insider track—first at the Urban League, then as Edward Kennedy's chief aide in the Senate, and, finally, at the apex of the Democratic National Committee.

Yet Brown, a lifelong liberal, was also a product of the freewheeling Washington of the nineteen-eighties. At the outset of that decade, he joined the voracious lobbying firm of Patton, Boggs & Blow, and there did business with some shady elements, including the government of Haiti, then ruled by Jean-Claude (Baby Doc) Duvalier. And, following Brown's selection as the Democratic National Chairman, in

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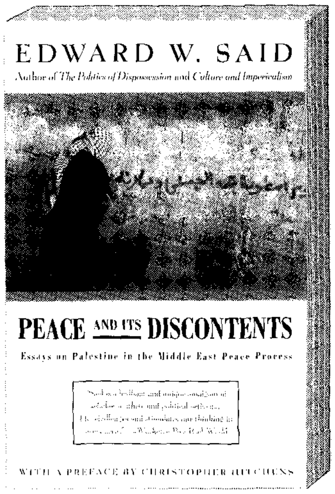
EDWARD W. SAID

One of the most outspoken critics of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process gives us an insider's view of its short, bloody history.

Photo: Gregory Heisler

PEACE AND ITS DISCONTENTS

Essays on Palestine in the Middle East Peace Process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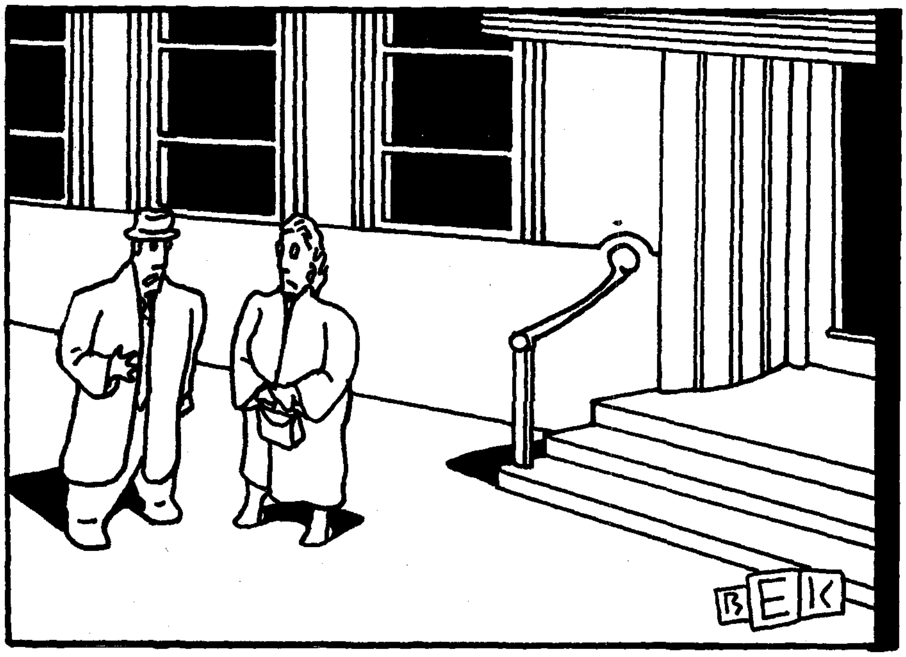
to Wall Street, and made a real fortune. Instead, he became, if not (as Clinton claimed) the best Secretary of Commerce in history, then certainly the most effective one since the pre-Presidential Herbert Hoover.

Brown used his Cabinet authority to stimulate American exports, first by streamlining obsolete export-control regulations and then by taking a personal interest in helping to broker foreign deals for American companies—small and medium-sized businesses as well as corporate giants. His efforts paid off in the form of scores of billions of dollars' worth of aircraft, telecommunications, and high-technology contracts—contracts, as John B. Judis observed in *The New Republic* last year, that "didn't just enrich individual firms but sustained entire industries." On the domestic front, Brown initiated a vast expansion of high-tech research and development to help speed the introduction of new technology.

He still had his critics. Some said that his deals might permit American companies' foreign-made goods to flow back to American markets, thereby undercutting the position of American workers. (That possibility, along with human-rights concerns, gave rise to sharp complaints about Brown's openings to China on behalf of American aircraft manufacturers.) And after the Republican avalanche of 1994 he had to face demands from the radical freshmen that the Commerce Department be abolished outright, in the name of eliminating interference with the sacred free market. Outwardly, he seemed unruffled, too busy planning his next trade trip to worry much about his detractors. He told friends he was having the time of his life, as the cynosure of global economic power.

Ron Brown had found a way to turn his fixer's art into a kind of statesmanship. In accordance with what might be called D'Amato's Law of Scandals, which decrees that the noise accompanying any allegation of Clinton-related wrongdoing is inversely proportional to its seriousness, his transgressions, such as they were, were made much of. But they unquestionably came nowhere near outweighing the contributions he made to the social, political, racial, and economic health of his country.

—SEAN WILENTZ



"I'm sorry. I just feel I should be dating someone closer to my daughter's age."

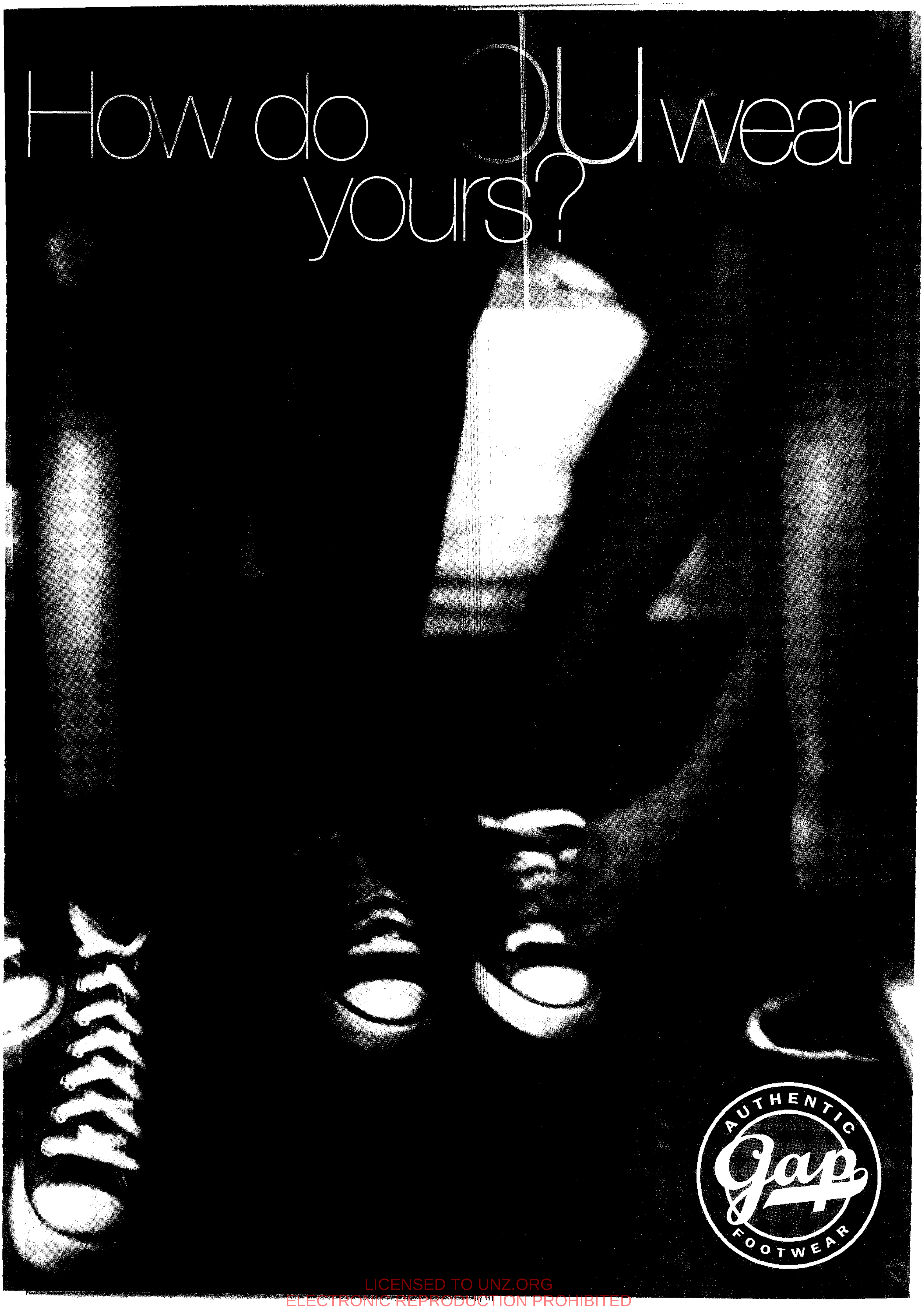
• •

1989, his name started turning up in the middle of business deals that would have made the departed sachems of Tammany Hall chuckle. There was, for example, the matter of his service on the board of directors of Chemfix, an aptly named waste-management company that, in 1990, was co-owner of a firm angling for a multimillion-dollar contract with the City of New York, which happened to be run just then by Brown's old friend David Dinkins. (The firm ultimately withdrew from the bidding, but by then Brown had exercised his option to buy additional shares of Chemfix's suddenly valuable stock at a price well below their market value.) And there was a string of questionable deals with a flamboyant investor named Nolanda S. Hill, which helped prompt an independent counsel's investigation—still under way when Brown's plane went down.

Whether these ventures involved any illegality may never be ascertained. But what has come to light falls, even at worst, into the category of what the ancient Tammany sage George Washington Plunkitt called "honest graft"—opportunities seen, opportunities taken—as distinct from actual plunder. Brown was not the boodler that his severest critics said he was. His artistry ran far more to political dealmaking than to personal fortune hunting; and he practiced his art well, with a discernible idealism.

Brown was not, to be sure, the first African American to enjoy insider clout at the highest levels, but he perfected the role, normalizing black politics as no one had done before him. As Jesse Jackson's manager at the 1988 Democratic Convention, in Atlanta, he turned Jackson from a movement-style protest candidate into a legitimate Party force. As Democratic National Chairman after the Dukakis debacle, he kept every faction feeling that it had a stake in the Party's success, and orchestrated what was, for Democrats, a miraculously harmonious and energetic Convention in 1992. And he kept Jackson on board as a loyal Democrat, smoothing the way for Clinton's victory. When provoked, Brown was not above playing the race card inside the Party's councils; but he was almost impossible to provoke, and always felt much more at home as a coalition politician than as a race man.

It was only after the 1992 election, however, that Brown's nobler aspirations became fully clear. Having been passed over for the choicest Cabinet positions, he took the job at the Commerce Department—long regarded as a nightmare bureaucracy. If he had consulted only his narrow self-interest (or some of his smart-money friends), he would have thanked Clinton, relocated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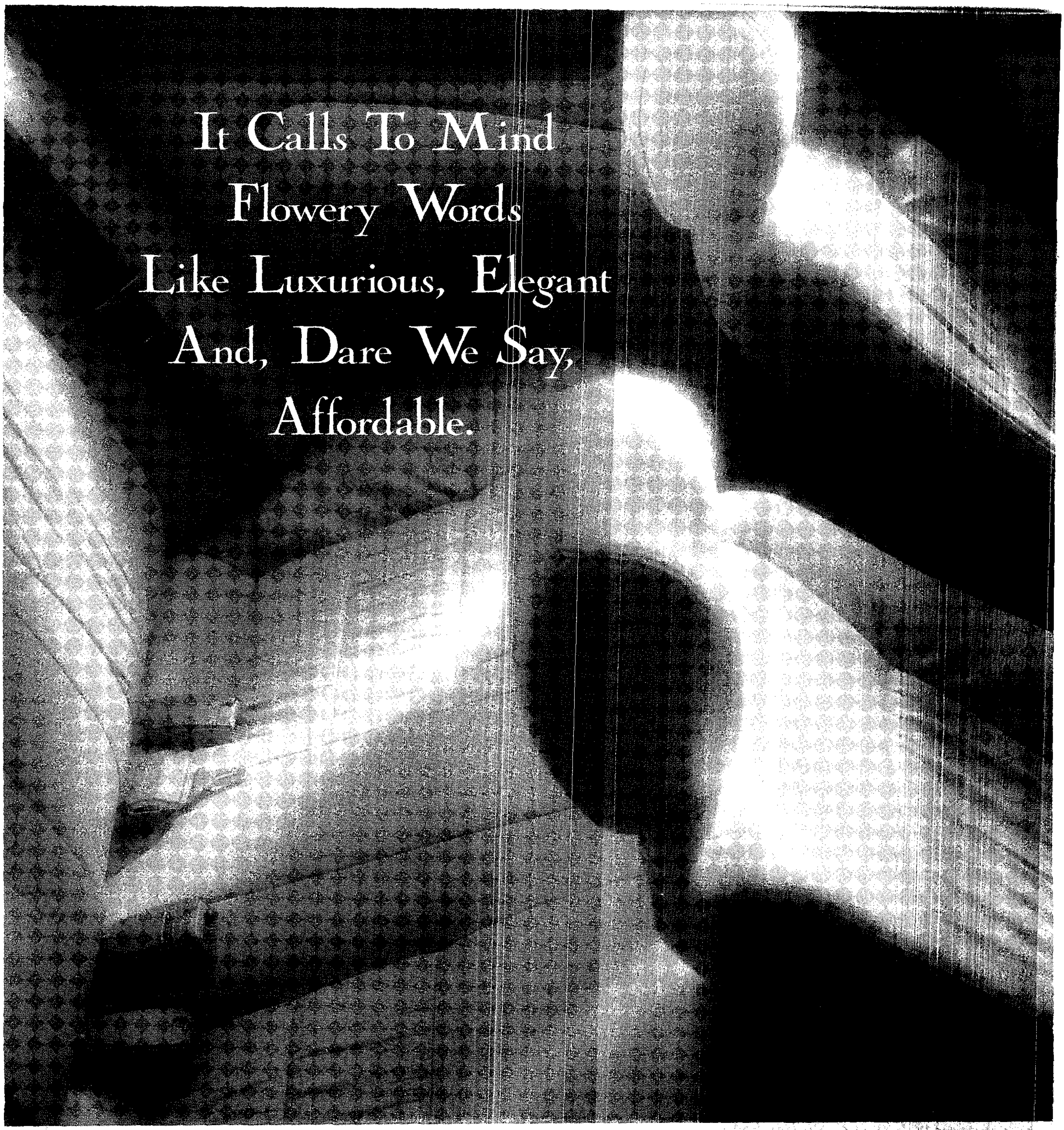

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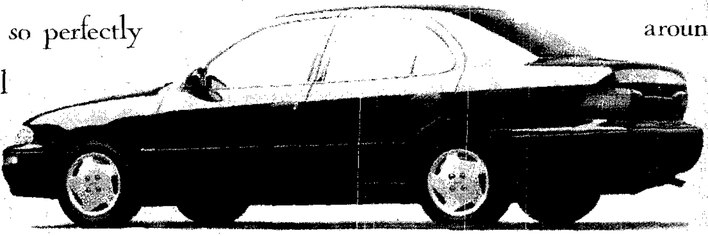

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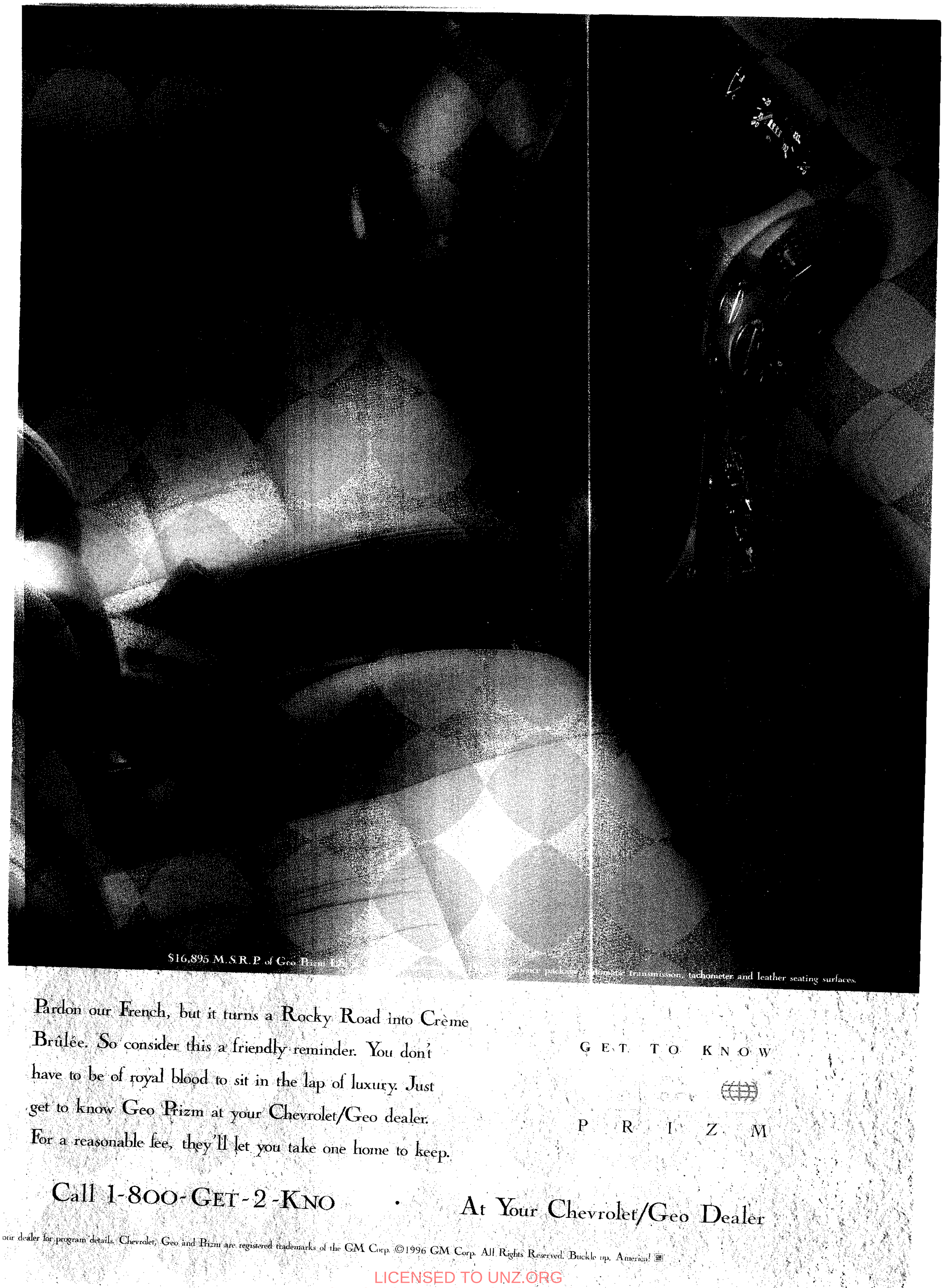

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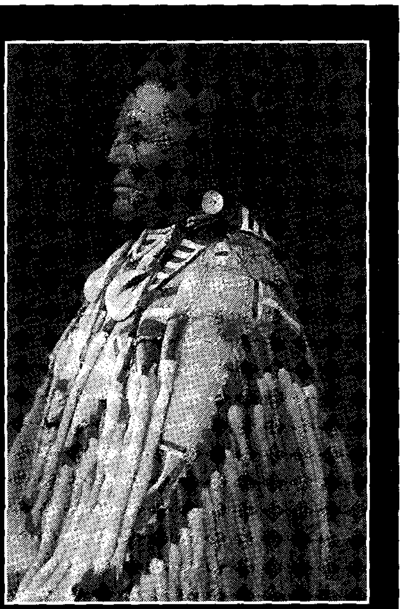

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Edward S. Curtis (1868-1952). Shot in the Hand – Apsaroke, large format photogravure. Plate 133, Portfolio IV. $15^{3}/_{4}$ x $10^{1}/_{4}$ in. Estimate for portfolio IV: $80,000-100,000

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IN THE MAIL

CUBAN CALAMITIES

Walter Russell Mead's Comment "Mutually Assured Stupidity" (March 11th) properly scorns our elected politicians for their actions toward Cuba, but it barely criticizes the immigrants who precipitated the recent crisis. Some among them are responsible for the unlawful acts mentioned in the article. What is more significant, many of them profess to be outraged over the economic and political conditions that prevail under Castro, but they lack the *cojones* to stay on the island and work to reform those conditions from within. Since the Cubans who are most virulently anti-Castro have abandoned that struggle, opting instead for liberty and opportunity in this country, Castro's enduring domination of the Cubans who remain there is not surprising.

PHILIP H. EDMUNDS
Boalsburg, Pa.

Tragic as Cuba's shooting down of the civilian planes over the Florida straits is, one cannot help thinking about the privileges that the United States offers the Cuban-American community but denies to other Caribbean citizens who have risked their lives trying to escape from poverty and oppression. Are Cubans more deserving of being saved than their neighbors—Haitians and Dominicans, who instead of being rescued are simply caught and sent back to their island, where they are often incarcerated for having dared to search for a better life?

BERTA GRACIANO
Beverly Hills, Calif.

I visited Cuba recently, and while I was there I spoke to perhaps fifty people in all walks of life. (I'm fluent in Spanish.) Contrary to what Mr. Mead says, I found no one who supported the Castro regime because of the American embargo. Cubans seem to decry their situation, and they lay the blame for it as much on socialism as on anything else. They were also unanimous in not wishing to return to the "Mafia gangster Batista" days of exploitation by American and Cuban aristocratic interests. They would prefer to suffer equally rather than have that gang return.

LANGSTON GOLDFINCH
New Orleans, La.

RUSSIAN ORTHODOXIES

Like every Russian who lives abroad, until recently I thought that being Russian gave me a very particular angle of vision, superior to that of Americans, on the affairs of my native country. However, David Remnick's farewell to Joseph Brodsky ("Perfect Pitch," February 12th) and his Letter from Russia ("Gorbachev's Last Hurrah," March 11th) shook my sense of superiority. Too often, we Russians fall into an imperial trap of thinking that only we can understand ourselves. So we don't like our Pushkin to be touched by others, and we think that Dostoyevski belongs only to us, and that Russian history, politics, and culture are unique. By assuming this position of intellectual or spiritual snobbism, we separate ourselves from the world. Dostoyevski believed that Russians are probably backward, but that we have souls. Perhaps it is time for us to reconsider this "universal truth"; one could amend it to: "We are probably backward, because we think that only we have souls."

NINA KHRUSHCHEVA
Princeton, N.J.

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THE THEATRE

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.)

Antigone in New York—The Polish-born playwright Janusz Glowacki's latest—a tragicomedy about the friendship of a homeless Latina and two Eastern European émigrés new to life on the street. Previews begin April 10. (Vineyard, 108 E. 15th St. 353-3874.)

The Apple Doesn't Fall—The overbearing mother (Florence Stanley) of an overachieving SWF (Margaret Whitton) develops Alzheimer's disease, in a new comedy-drama by Trish Vradenburg. Leonard Nimoy is the director. In previews through April 13. Opens April 14 at 6:30. (Lyceum, 149 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Big—A new musical by John Weidman (book), Richard Maltby, Jr. (lyrics), and David Shire (music), based on the 1988 movie. Directed by Mike Ockrent, with choreography by Susan Stroman. In previews. (Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

The Boar's Carcass—A new thriller by Stephanie Dickinson. In previews through April 13. Opens April 14 at 7. (Theatre at St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. 935-5820.)

Checkmates—Ruby Dee and Arthur French lead the cast in a revival of Ron Milner's 1988 play. Previews April 10-13. Opens April 14 at 3. (Henry Street Settlement, 466 Grand St. 279-4200.)

Curtains—Stephen Bill's 1987 dark comedy about aging, directed by Scott Elliott. Previews begin April 13. (INTAR, 420 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

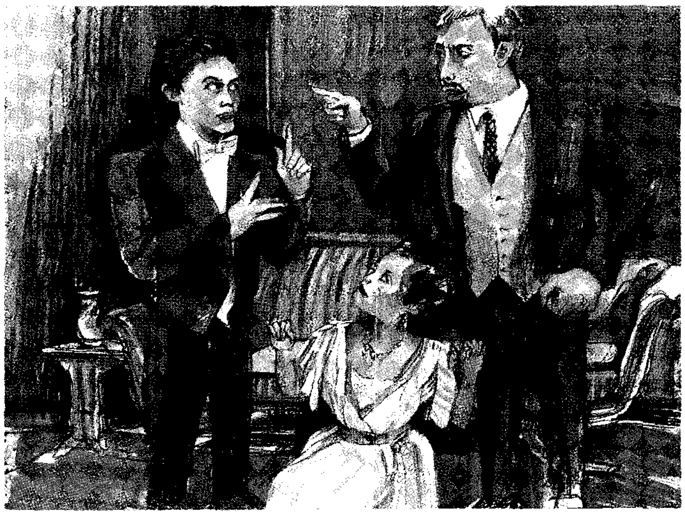
A Delicate Balance—Lincoln Center Theatre presents Edward Albee's unbalanced-family drama, first staged in 1966. With John Carter, George Grizzard, Rosemary Harris, Mary Beth Hurt, Elaine Stritch, and Elizabeth Wilson. Directed by Gerald Gutierrez. In previews. (Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Do Something with Yourself: The Life of Charlotte Brontë—Playwright Linda Manning portrays the author. Previews April 10-13. Opens April 14 at 2. (Miranda, 259 W. 30th St. 532-6719.)

Don Juan Comes Back from the War—The Classic Stage Company presents the German playwright Ödön von Horváth's version of the rake's tale. In previews through April 11. Opens April 12 at 8. (136 E. 13th St. 677-4210.)

A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum—A revival of the 1962 Stephen Sondheim–Burt Shevelove–Larry Gelbart musical, starring Nathan Lane as the Roman slave Pseudolus. Directed by Jerry Zaks, with choreography by Rob Marshall. In previews. (St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

The King and I—A revival of the 1950 Rodgers and Hammerstein musical. Christopher Renshaw directs. Two previews on April 10. Opens April 11 at 6:30. (Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 307-4100.)



David Kimo Ige, Mel Duane Gionson, and Mia Katigbak, in Shaw's "How He Lied to Her Husband."

The Slow Drag—Vernel Bagneris, Ann Crumb, and Peggy Shaw, accompanied by an onstage quartet, in a new play by Carson Kreitzer, about a jazz musician on the last night of his life. In previews. (American Place, 111 W. 46th St. 840-3074.)

Tovah: Out of Her Mind—A one-woman cavalcade of characters, with song, from Tovah Feldshuh. Previews begin April 13. (Playhouse 91, at 316 E. 91st St. 831-2000.)

Venus—Suzan-Lori Parks's new drama, based on true events, tells the story of an African woman who was exhibited as "the Hottentot Venus" by an English circus in the early nineteenth century. Directed by Richard Foreman. Previews begin April 16. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 260-2400.)

Wally's Ghost—Two couples—one gay, one straight—try to make a decent life in New York, in Ain Gordon's new play. Previews begin April 13. (SoHo Rep, 46 Walker St. 977-5955.)

OPENED RECENTLY

Andrea Martin and **Marga Gomez**—Two solo shows. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 260-2400.)

Bein' with Behan—The talented and hardworking Michael L. Kavanagh portrays the late poet, playwright, and political activist Brendan Behan in a formulaic two-hour monologue—and the audience, unlike the actor, doesn't have the solace of a pint. (Irish Repertory Theatre, 132 W. 22nd St. 279-4200.)

Below the Belt—Richard Dresser's brilliant dark comedy is set in "an industrial compound in a distant land," but it hits close to home in its dead-on absurdist take on modern life. Judd Hirsch, Robert Sean Leonard, and Jude Ciccolella are three men who work for a company that makes "units." (Units of what, you ask? Don't ask.) Dresser's dialogue sharply and resonantly limns their paranoia. You may wish for slightly sharper performances from the actors, but the production, under the direction of Gloria Muzio, especially the vividly drab set and costumes, is nevertheless very satisfying. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 239-6200.)

Bomber Jackets—Rob Santana's new play, which centers on a gang member's encounter with a transvestite in Bay Ridge, is an intense, well-played, and entirely believable exploration of the visceral nature of stereotypes and the wrench it takes to get beyond them. Directed by Alba Oms. Performances are in English Wednesdays through Fridays and in Spanish on Saturdays and Sundays. (Puerto Rican Traveling Theatre, 304 W. 47th St. 354-1293. Closes April 21.)

Bring in 'da Noise, Bring in 'da Funk—Director George C. Wolfe and dancer-choreographer Savion Glover's heroically energetic African-American musical. (Reviewed in our issue of 12/4/95.) (Ambassador, 219 W. 49th St. 239-6200.)

Charlie!—There's intrigue in the cosmetics industry, in Theatre Couture's new musical comedy, starring Sherry Vine, Misstress Formika, and Candis Cayne. Thursdays through Sundays, through April 28. (P.S. 122, 150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288.)

Cowgirls—"You ain't country," Jo Carlson (the talented Rhonda Coullet) accuses the chamber-music trio she has mistakenly booked into her Rexford, Kansas, tavern, but by the end of this appealing, if somewhat predictable, musical comedy, the threesome has been transformed into fringe-wearin', honky-tonkin' cowgirls. Mary Murfitt, the show's composer and lyricist, is hilarious as an uptight violinist learning how to shake it. The versatile cast also includes Mary Ehlinger, Lori Fischer, Betsy Howie (who wrote the book), and Jackie Sanders. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 420-8000.)

A Fair Country—In Jon Robin Baitz's neatly packaged but hollow new play, a well-meaning American diplomat (Laurence Luckinbill) in South Africa and The Hague sets in motion an unseen but horrifying course of events when he takes steps to keep his family from disintegrating. (3/11/96) (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

Forbidden Hollywood—The many hits in Gerard Alessandrini's hit-and-miss movie-biz

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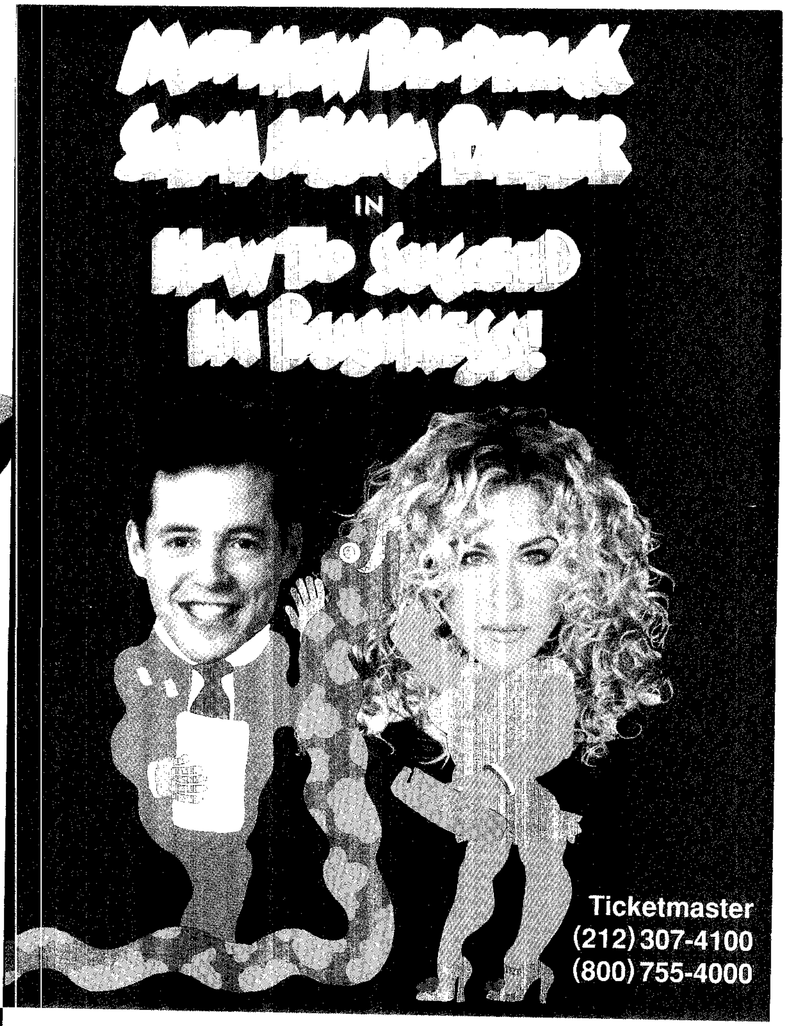
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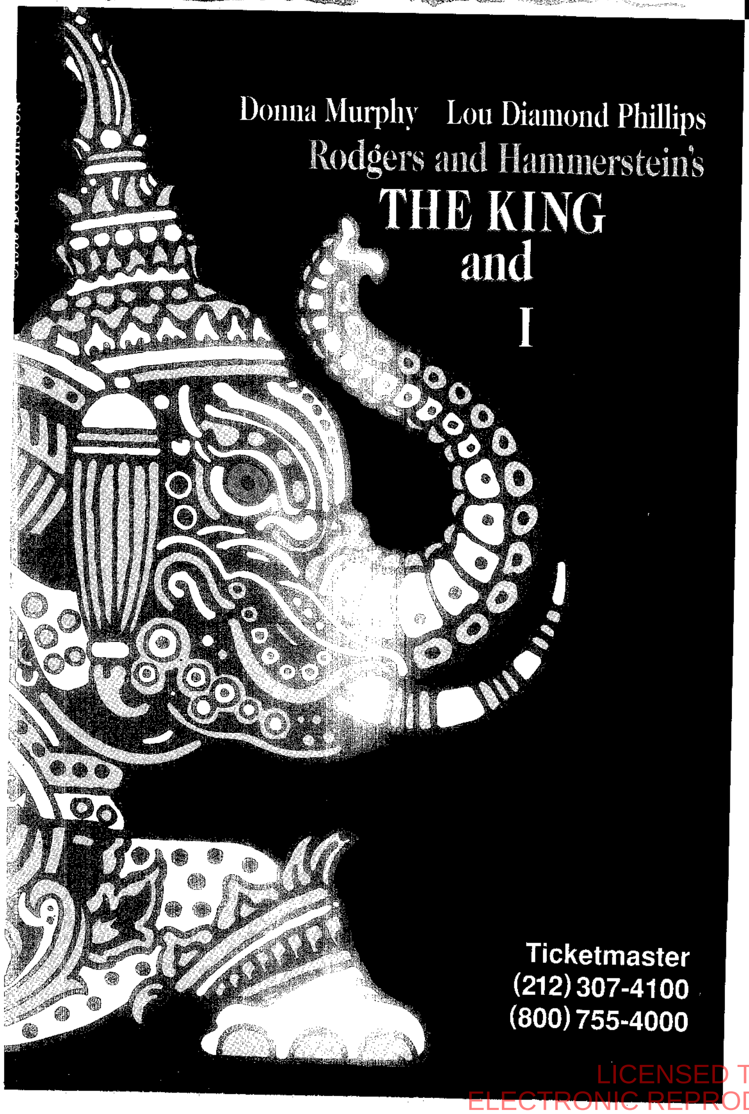
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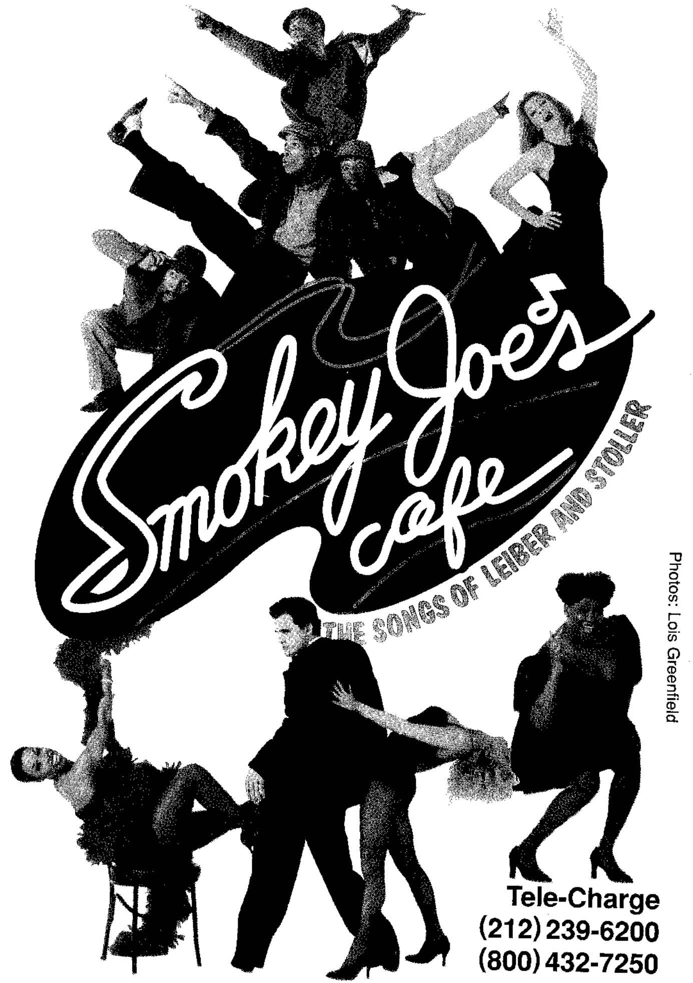
Smokey Joe's cafe
THE SONGS OF LEIBER AND STOLLER
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sendup include a sloshed Pat and Dick Nixon going on about Oliver Stone. The most conspicuous miss is an impersonation of Demi Moore, whose imperviousness to caricature says much about the nature of her stardom. (Triad, 158 W. 72nd St. 799-4599.)

How He Lied to Her Husband and **Village Wooing**—The National Asian-American Theatre Company presents two one-acts by Shaw. (Vineyard's 26th St. Theatre, 309 E. 26th St. 505-3003. Closes April 14.)

I Do! I Do!—Tom Jones and Harvey Schmidt's 1964 musical comedy about marriage. (Lamb's, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780.)

Inherit the Wind—George C. Scott and Charles Durning go head to head in a revival of the 1955 drama about the Scopes "monkey trial." Directed by John Tillinger. (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6280.)

Life Is a Dream—The Pearl Theatre Company's production of Calderón's 1635-36 drama, which asks whether a person can change the fate that the stars have decreed, overcomes the fundamental problem of a story loaded with action but also with speeches. Robert Joel Schwartz's set suggests (appropriately) a deconstructed astrolabe, Murell Horton's costumes fit the period without overwhelming the production, and Rob Bundy's direction emphasizes humor. The very strong cast, led by Joanne Camp, Bradford Cover, and John Wylie, makes the speeches almost as much fun as the battles, without ever losing sight of the playwright's philosophical point. (80 St. Marks Pl. 598-9802.)

Love Thy Neighbor—Jackie Mason returns to Broadway, with the Boys Choir of Harlem, in a new one-man show (of sorts). (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Master Class—Zoe Caldwell portrays Maria Callas with steely, divaesque conviction in Terrence McNally's latest play, but the role is merely the sum of all the clichés that have been in circulation for years. Leonard Foglia directed. (11/27/95) (Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

A Midsummer Night's Dream—The Royal Shakespeare Company brings the comedy to town for a ten-week engagement. Directed by Adrian Noble. (Lunt-Fontanne, 205 W. 46th St. 307-4100.)

Mrs. Klein—Two London psychoanalysts—the famous Melanie Klein (Uta Hagen) and her less renowned daughter, Melitta (Laila Robins)—face off in a murderous argument and proceed to browbeat each other with theory in Nicholas Wright's smart though schematic drama. Robins is excellent; Hagen is brilliant. (11/20/95) (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 239-6200.)

Molly Sweeney—Brian Friel's 1994 play owes much to an Oliver Sacks case study, but Friel didn't reimagine the material, and the play, which he directed, comes across as a staged reading of an essay. (1/29/96) (Laura Pels, Broadway at 45th St. 869-8400.)

The Night of the Iguana—Robert Falls's production does justice to Tennessee Williams's 1961 play, in which spiritual longings play out in the hothouse setting of coastal Mexico. In the central role of the feverish fallen minister, William Petersen, in sweaty agony, gives you the feeling that there is something holy in him wrestling to get out. Cherry Jones, as "a New England spinster who is pushing forty," is his opposite: her character has achieved a hard-won peace with herself, and, though Jones seems too pink-cheeked and Girl Scoutish for the role, she has a quiet gravity that compels attention. Marsha Mason seems right at home as the earthy voluptuary who owns the rustic hotel where the play is set. Also with Lawrence McCauley. (1/8/96) (Roundabout, Broadway at 45th St. 869-8400.)

Nixon's Nixon—On the eve of his resignation, the thirty-seventh President and his secretary of state uncork the brandy decanter and spill a few secrets about power as they have known it. The script, by Russell Lees, has its share of dead spots, but the performers—Gerry Bamman as Nixon and Steve Mellor as Kissinger—are always engaging and sometimes masterful. Directed by Jim Simpson. (Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 315-2244.)

No Exit—The Independent Theatre Company presents Sartre's 1945 existentialist drama. (House of Candles Theatre, 99 Stanton St. 353-3088.)

Overtime—A. R. Gurney's latest, a modern "sequel" to "The Merchant of Venice," asks the Rodney King question, "Can we all get along?" This time around, Portia (wonderfully played by Joan McMurtrey) is an echt-Wasp party giver, Salerio (the excellent Robert Stanton) an uptight accountant in a Brooks Brothers suit, Shylock (Nicholas Kepros) a sweet old mensch—you get the picture. Gurney takes aim at every imaginable stereotype, and about half the time he hits his target. Nicholas Martin directed. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212. Closes April 14.)

Picasso at the Lapin Agile—Set in a Paris bar in 1904, Steve Martin's comedy features Einstein and Picasso sittin' around talkin' about how they're going to change the world. It contains a satisfying amount of Martin's coolly absurdist humor—but there's a certain sourness to the proceedings which may put you off. (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 239-6200.)

Rent—The rock opera's downtown run has ended; it begins performances at Broadway's Nederlander Theatre on April 16. (2/19/96) (208 W. 41st St. 921-8000.)

Sabina—Willy Holtzman has based this ambitious, intelligent new drama on Aldo Carotenuto's 1982 book, "A Secret Symmetry," which revealed Sabina Spielrein's previously all but unknown contributions to Carl Jung's work. In spite of some necessarily turgid jargon, the drama re-creates the analytic process beautifully, thanks to a sleek production, elegant direction by Melia Bensussen, and some fine performances, especially by Marin Hinkle, in the title role, and David Adkins, as the analyst Ludwig Binswanger. (Primary Stages, 354 W. 45th St. 333-4052. Closes April 21.)

Seven Guitars—August Wilson's new play, set in Pittsburgh in 1948, examines the final days in the life of a blues guitarist (Keith David). Lloyd Richards is the director. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

The Shattering—A family's naïve support of a third-party Presidential candidate brings about its collapse. Written by Mark R. Shapiro. (Players, 115 Macdougal St. 239-6200.)

State Fair—A stage version of the 1945 Rodgers and Hammerstein movie musical. Directed by James Hammerstein and Randy Skinner. (Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Sunset Salome—Thespians at the Whispering Sands Hospital for the Criminally Insane cook up a musical version of the Biblical tale, in a new play by Peter Wing Healey (libretto) and Max Kinberg (music). (HERE, 145 Sixth Ave., near Spring St. 647-0202.)

Tartuffe—The Jean Cocteau Repertory presents Richard Wilbur's translation of Molière's 1664 comedy, which will run in rotation with Shaw's "Major Barbara." (Bouwerie Lane Theatre, 330 Bowery, at Bond St. 677-0060.)

Victor; or, Children Take Over—The Arden Party Theatre Company presents the French Surrealist Roger Vitrac's satire of nineteen-twenties bourgeois society. Directed by Karen Coonrod. (Ohio Theatre, 66 Wooster St. 969-0551. Closes April 14.)

Victor/Victoria—Julie Andrews, Tony Roberts, and Michael Nouri star in a theatrical version of the 1982 movie. The score (by Henry Mancini) is generic, and the book (by Blake Edwards, who also directed) is patchwork. (11/20/95) (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100.)

Virgins and Other Myths—The run of Colin Martin's one-man play has ended at Primary Stages; it begins performances at the Atlantic on April 12. (336 W. 20th St. 239-6200.)

Working Title—Andrew Bergman's new comedy. (American Jewish Theatre, 307 W. 26th St. 633-9797. Closes April 17.)

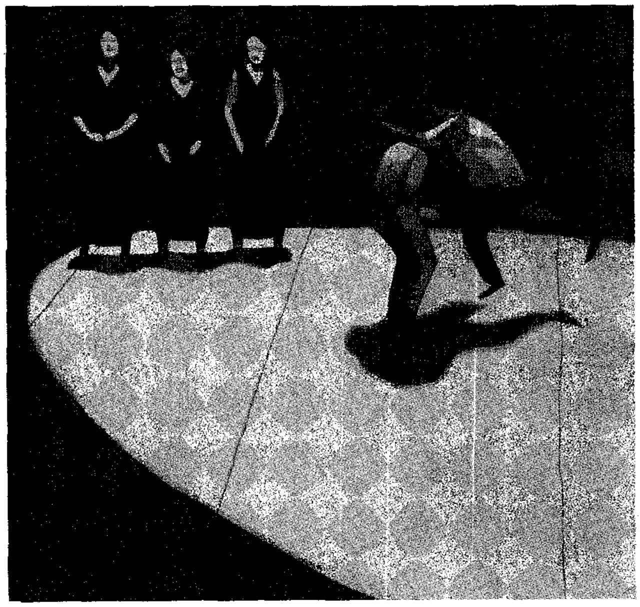
Zombie Prom—A new nineteen-fifties rock-and-roll musical. (Variety Arts, Third Ave. at 14th St. 239-6200.)

LONG RUNS

AFTER-PLAY: Theatre Four, 424 W. 55th St. 239-6200. . . . **BEAUTY AND THE BEAST:** Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 307-4100. . . . **BLUE MAN GROUP/TUBES:** Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370. . . . **CATS:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. . . . **THE FOOD CHAIN:** Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 307-4100. . . . **GRANDMA SYLVIA'S FUNERAL:** SoHo Playhouse, 15 Vandam St. 691-1555. . . . **GREASE!:** Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 239-6200. . . . **HOW TO SUCCEED IN BUSINESS WITHOUT REALLY TRYING:** Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 307-4100. . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **MISS SAIGON:** Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. . . . **MOON OVER BUFFALO:** Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **PERFECT CRIME:** Duffy, 1553 Broadway, at 46th St. 695-3401. . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **ROB BECKER'S DEFENDING THE CAVEMAN:** Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 307-4100. . . . **SHOW BOAT:** Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 307-4100. . . . **SMOKEY JOE'S CAFÉ:** Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200. . . . **STOMP:** Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at St. Marks Pl. 477-2477. . . . **SUNSET BOULEVARD:** Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 307-4007. . . . **TONY N' TINA'S WEDDING:** St. John's Church, 81 Christopher St. 279-4200.

DANCE

The Portugal Project/Nova Dança Portugal '96—"The people dealing with culture are cultured people now," the choreographer Paulo Ribeiro says, referring to the October elections that led to the installation of a minister of culture, a newly created position in the Portuguese Cabinet. Some of the trickle-down effects of



Companhia Paulo Ribeiro's "Sábado 2," at Danspace Project.

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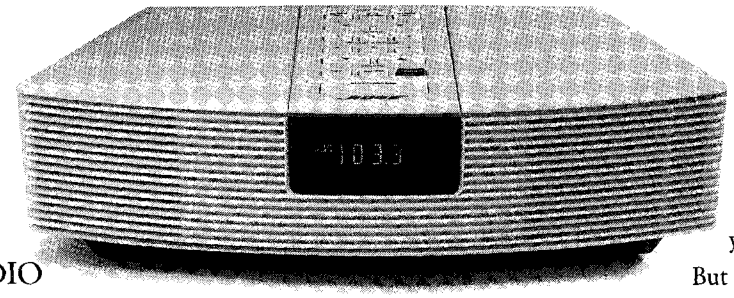

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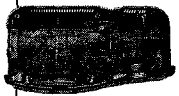

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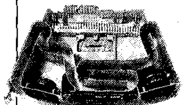

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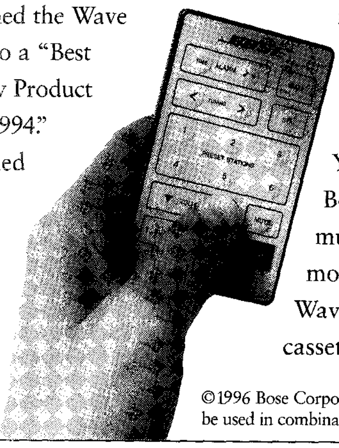

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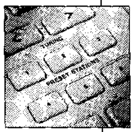

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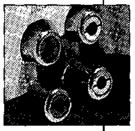

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the country's invigorated arts promotion show up here this week with the opening of the Portugal Project dance festival: Ribeiro and his company perform at Danspace Project while Vera Montero and her dancers appear at the Kitchen; Clara Andermatt arrives two weeks later, at Dance Theatre Workshop. The three choreographers share an appealing theatricality in which religious themes mingle with a certain worldly, sexy apostasy. Ribeiro points to the burden of the country's past—a blend of Catholicism and Fascism much like Francoist Spain's. "It's a romanticism," he says, "with a lot of ghosts." **COMPANHIA PAULO RIBEIRO:** In "Sábado 2." (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave at 10th St. 674-8194. April 11-13 at 8:30.) . . . ¶ **VERA MONTERO:** In "For Bored and Profound Sadness" and "Perhaps She Could Dance First and Think Afterwards." (512 W. 19th St. 255-5793. April 11-14 at 8.) . . . ¶ **CLARA ANDERMATT:** In "Cio Azul" ("Blue Heat") and "O Cansaço dos Santos" ("The Weariness of the Saints"). (219 W. 19th St. 924-0077. April 25-27 at 8.)

Stephen Petronio Company—The choreographer and former Trisha Brown dancer performs solo, in "#3," and his eight-member troupe offers "Lareigne" (1995) and two new works, "Drawn That Way" and "#4." (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. April 10-13 at 8 and April 14 at 2 and 7:30.)

Dance at the World Financial Center—Bebe Miller kicks off the World Financial Center's series of five free performances in its Winter Garden with "Heaven & Earth" and "The Hendrix Project," set to gospel and Jimi Hendrix, respectively. (Battery Park City. April 10 at 7. No tickets necessary.)

Les Ballets Africains—The thirty-five members of the national dance company of the Republic of Guinea present "Heritage," a full-length work based on West African legends about Bala Fassake Kouyate, a twelfth-century griot in the court of the Mandingo Empire who discovered the secrets of the xylophone. (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212. April 12-13 at 8.)

Mary Anthony Dance Theatre—The troupe celebrates its fortieth-anniversary season with works by Daniel Maloney, Ross Parkes, Kun-Yang Lin, Charles Weidman, and company founder and modern-dance teacher Mary Anthony. (Merce Cunningham Studio, 55 Bethune St. 674-8191. April 11-12 at 9 and April 13 at 8.)

Dia Dance—New work from three choreographers: Wendell Beavers presents the third part of his "Freeing the Dura"; Douglas Dunn performs (on April 12 only) in an untitled trio; and Tina Croll offers three shorter works, including "Rabbit," in which she dances with her eighty-five-year-old mother, the actress Helen Lloyd Breed. (Dia Center for the Arts, 155 Mercer St. 675-2645. April 11-12 at 8.)

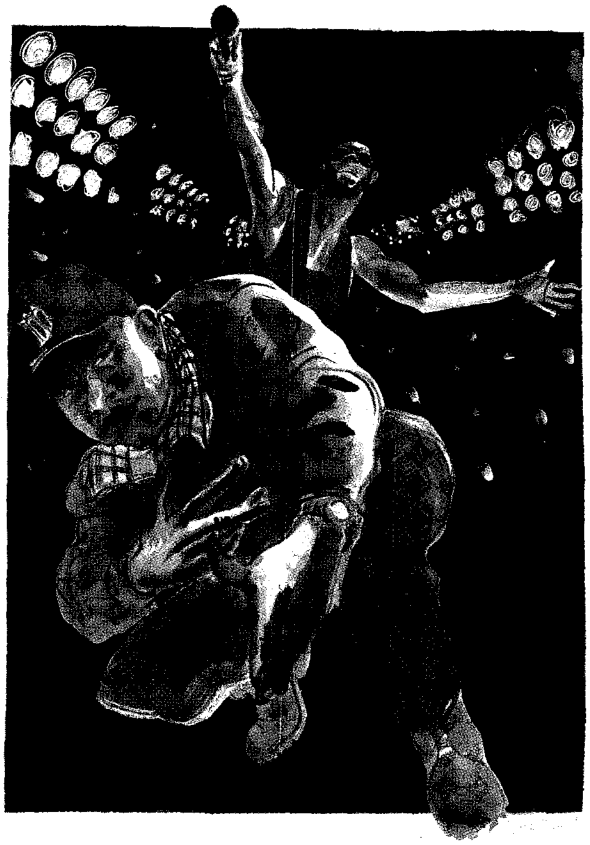
Women Dancemakers 9—Marshall Swiney, artistic director of the Thelma Hill Performing Arts Center, curates a program of new work by Miriam Barbosa, Teri Cousar, Patricia Hoffbauer, Paz Tanjuaquio, and Andrea Woods. (Triangle Theatre, Flatbush and DeKalb Aves., Brooklyn. 1-718 875-9710. April 13 at 8 and April 14 at 2 and 7.)

"The Idea of East"—In three solos, Muna Tseng collaborates with director Ping Chong, composer Tan Dun, and pianist Margaret Leng Tan, respectively. She concludes the evening with Cage's "4′ 33″." (P.S. 122, 150 First Ave., at Ninth St. 477-5288. April 11-14 at 9.)

NIGHT LIFE

CONCERTS

LL Cool J / R. Kelly—Since his proclamation "I Can't Live Without My Radio," a decade ago, this Queens native, now twenty-eight, has been our preëminent rapper. His recorded output, "Bigger and Deffer" (1987), the sly "Walking with a Panther" (1989), the smash "Mama Said Knock You Out" (1990), and the underrated "Fourteen Shots to the Dome" (1993), has been not just excellent but consistent, too—a rarity in the hip-hop world. His latest, "Mr. Smith" (he was born James Todd Smith), finds him cleverly straddling the line between the hardcore and the romantic. As his stellar 1991 performance on "MTV Unplugged" showed, he's a handsome and sophisticated performer. / R. Kelly's mix of street smarts, sensitivity, and sexual braggadocio sent his first two records, "Born in the Nineties" and "Twelve Play," into the multiplatinum column. His eponymous third album should wind up in the same place. An evening of testosterone on parade. (Nassau Coliseum. 1-516 794-9300. April 10 at 7:30.)



LL Cool J and R. Kelly, at Nassau Coliseum.

JOE DAVIS

Bush / Goo Goo Dolls—Because it traffics in grunge lite and has a pinup for a front man, Bush has been ridiculed by the American press and roundly ignored in its native England. But the band's début album, "Sixteen Stone," has sold more than four million copies and scored five hit singles here. Could this be the British answer to Green Day? / The Buffalo-based Goo Goo Dolls are a groovy rock-anthem band specializing in power chords and stadium-size riffs. Their sound—a blend of punk, metal, and pop—brings to mind the Replacements, but they're more starry-eyed and youthfully driven. (And the Replacements never made a habit of performing barefoot.) They'll be showcasing material from their excellent 1995 album, "A Boy Named Goo." (Nassau Coliseum. April 11 at 7:30.)

Joe Satriani—The latest musician to don the herculean mantle of guitar hero, Satriani joins a list that includes muscle-fingered contenders from Jeff Beck to Dick Dale. He sure can play fast, but taste is not his strong suit. (Roseland, 239 W. 52nd St. 307-7171. April 11 at 8.)

The Pogues—Few bands have given screwing up such a good name. Over the course of their improbable career, these recalcitrant Irish punks from London have worked with everyone from Elvis Costello to the Clash's Joe Strummer (who produced them and became their temporary lead singer after Shane MacGowan's drunken antics forced the band to finally sack him). Their latest album, "Pogue Mahone," is Gaelic slang for "kiss my ass," and, led by tin whistler Spider Stacy and banjoist Jem Finer, they sound as rollicking and snotty as ever. (Supper Club, 240 W. 47th St. 921-1940. April 11 at 8:30.)

"Great Guitars"—A meeting of three great musicians. Bossa-nova pioneer Charlie Byrd, who plays his acoustic instrument with spidery elegance; Mundell Lowe, an early exponent of bebop and a discreetly fluent stylist; and Russell Malone, a studied young player who swings with chops galore. With tenor saxophonist Houston Person and vocalist Etta Jones. (Pace Downtown Theatre, Spruce St. between Nassau and Gold Sts. 346-1715. April 11 at 8.)

Radiohead—Thom Yorke, the lead singer of this Brit-pop phenonemon whose latest effort, "The Bends," landed on many a year-end list, looks like Martin Short's evil twin and has a well-earned reputation for being a complete pest. But don't let that put you off: it's these very qualities that somehow provide a flinty core to Radiohead's distracting lushness. With David Gray, a Welsh singer-songwriter of considerable talent who brays like Billy Bragg but is in fact closer in spirit to Cat Stevens. His new record, "Sell Sell Sell," heads into electrified territory, a move that may cause despair among ardent followers but will probably make radio programmers' hearts skip a beat or two. (Roseland. April 12 at 8.)

"Battle Royale"—For sheer excitement, there's little that can touch the sight and sound of a gladiatorial hornman determined that the next chorus will be the one that blows his opponent out of the hall. These contests can get ugly sometimes—that's the good news. This year's showdown is a heavyweight encounter. The trumpeters are the cream of the neo-bop brawlers: Wynton Marsalis, Jon Faddis, Roy Hargrove, and Nicholas Payton. The spectacular tenor-saxophone lineup—Johnny Griffin, Von Freeman, Teddy Edwards, and Joe Lovano—is a convocation of giants. If they pace themselves before going for the throat, this could be a classic. Also with Cyrus Chestnut, Reginald Veal, and Lewis Nash. (Avery Fisher Hall. 875-5030. April 12 at 8.)

Art Garfunkel—In a career retrospective. (Registry Hall, Ellis Island. 307-4653. April 12-13 at 8.)

Marian McPartland and Dick Hyman—As jazz institutions go, McPartland is pretty frisky, and her piano work is as elegant as ever. Hyman is a pianist with the history of American popular song (pre-rock and roll, that is) at his fingertips. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100. April 13 at 8.)

Ministry—Led by Al Jourgensen, an uncompromising last-biker-of-the-Apocalypse sort of chap, this protean Chicago band has gone through more stylistic changes than Picasso. It first appeared in 1983, as an effete synth-pop outfit à la the Human League, with a gift for memorable hooks. ("Work for Love," from the album "With Sympathy," achieved minor dance-floor success, as did its earlier indie single, "Cold Life.") Three years later, the band resurfaced with "Twitch," a record that in the genre commonly known as industrial is now considered a landmark for its judicious use of metallic noise and dissonance. Around that time, Jourgensen appeared on "Donahue" looking relatively clean-cut in a pink shirt and mirrored shades, but in another three years he was covered with hair, black leather, and tattoos, and Ministry had brought forth such devolutionary works as "Land of Rape and Honey" and "A Mind Is a Terrible Thing to Taste," which forced the band into performing behind a chicken-wire fence. (Jourgensen had also begun dabbling in a handful of delicately named side projects, including the Revolting Cocks, 1000 Homo DJ's, Pailhead, and Lard.) But although he alienated the pointy-shoed New Wave contingent, his twisted muse has attracted the affections of an enormous (if slightly troubled) base of fans, many of whom find the work of Nine Inch Nails too sensitive. With punk outlaw Foetus and the Swiss industrial outfit Young Gods. (Roseland. April 14-15 at 7:30.)

Primus—With a thump-thump here and a thud-thud there, this cartoonish Bay Area trio churns out charming ditties like "Professor Nutbutter's House of Treats" and lyrics along the lines of "Is there heaven, is there hell? / Is that tuna melt that I smell?" Led by the baser instincts of bassist and singer Les Claypool, the band's latest disk makes Beavis and Butt-head look like Rhodes Scholars. The coolest things about it are its wildly animated videos and a recent CD-ROM version of its latest disk, "Tales from the Punchbowl," which, if you turn off the sound, plays like a surreal silent movie. (Roseland. April 16 at 7:30.)

Cowboy Junkies—This Canadian quintet has released five albums over the past six years, an enterprising performance for a group whose breakthrough record, "The Trinity Session" (1989), sounded as if it had been made by shy, depressive hippies who could barely get out of bed in the morning. On its last record, "Pale Sun, Crescent Moon," the band appeared to have discovered caffeine and the electric guitar; their latest effort, "Lay It Down," takes that coffee-achiever spirit even further. The hushed, meditative plaint of Margo Timmins' singing and the diaristic intricacies of her brother Michael's lyrics still dominate, but the group continues to explore its rough edge. Don't expect a mosh pit, though: the Cowboy Junkies' fast songs are still slower than most bands' ballads. (Beacon Theatre, Broadway at 74th St. 496-7070. April 16 at 8.)

CLUBS

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type indicates some of the more notable performers in town. Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it is advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.)

Blarney Star, 43 Murray St. (732-2873)—Home to fine Irish music every Friday night. April 12: **robbie o'connell.** Though he's best known for his work with his famed uncles, the Clancy Brothers, O'Connell is a talented singer-songwriter whose solo performances are filled with wistful Irish-American reflections.

Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—April 10: **keb mo.** Mo is an acoustic-blues throwback who was once a fusion guitarist called Kevin Moore. His fine new album, "Just Like You," features two of the genre's requisite ingredients: a Robert Johnson cover and a guest appearance by Bonnie Raitt. With blues great **taj mahal.**

Brownies, 169 Avenue A, at 10th St. (420-8392)—April 11: The Wrens and Clarissa. April 12: **tommy keene.** April 16: **splendora,** an elegantly noisy all-female quintet, led by sisters Janet and Tricia Wygal, which recently released a delightful début album called "In the Grass." With Magnapop.

Fez, 380 Lafayette St. (533-7000)—April 12: The **loser's lounge** disembowels the music of Randy Newman. April 16: David Yazbek. The **mingus big band** still packs them in every Thursday. Dining.

Irving Plaza, 17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (777-6800)—April 10: **echobelly.** After listening to this punchy English quartet, it's not surprising to find out that the group's front woman, Sonya Aurora Madan, practices kick-boxing in her spare time. The band draws its strength from a dual-guitar attack, catchy melodies, and a cheeky sense of irony delivered by Madan with a dramatic flair that brings Morrissey (an early Echobelly champion) to mind. April 12: The bluejeans-and-tie-dye sounds of **god street wine,** a collection of youngsters devoted to the music of the seventies, a decade they actually experienced through a filter of "Sesame Street" and stewed apricots. The band's latest record is called "Red," and, thanks to their remarkably devoted fans, they have sold out this venue in close to record time. . . . ¶ The Swing Dance Society gathers here every Sunday, with sets from eight until midnight. For information on the society, call 696-9737.

Limelight, Sixth Ave. at 20th St. (807-7850)—A church turned eighties hot spot, this unholy venue currently plays host to a variety of techno and alternative acts. Wednesday night is Disco 2000.

Ludlow Street Café, 165 Ludlow St. (353-0536)—An unassuming basement restaurant-bar, where you can drink cheap and catch live music nightly. Mondays belong to **beat rodeo,** a straight-shooting bar band that plays a mixture of country, blues, Dylan, Byrds, Velvets, and various pop curiosities.

Manny's Car Wash, 1558 Third Ave., at 87th St. (369-2583)—April 11: **johnny (clyde) copeland.** Even as he awaits a much needed heart operation, this Grammy-winning guitarist and singer still plays the blues with determination and passion.

Mercury Lounge, 217 E. Houston St. (260-4700)—The **cucumbers** (April 15) play delicately sweet pop, and the majority of their songs eschew fat, distorted guitar notes in favor of twangy country-flavored elements, like banjo, mandolin, and forlorn vocals.

Les Poulets, 16 W. 22nd St. (229-2000)—The name may be French, but the music here is Latin: expect salsa, merengue, and, now and then, a cha-cha. Dining.

Rodeo Bar, 375 Third Ave., at 27th St. (683-6500)—The walls simulate a log cabin, a buffalo head blows smoke through its nostrils, a horse trailer has been converted into a bar, and you get peanuts for eating and, sometimes, throwing.

S.O.B.'s, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—A great grass hut with a fruit-and-bamboo motif, dedicated to calypso, reggae, and the bossa nova. Dining.

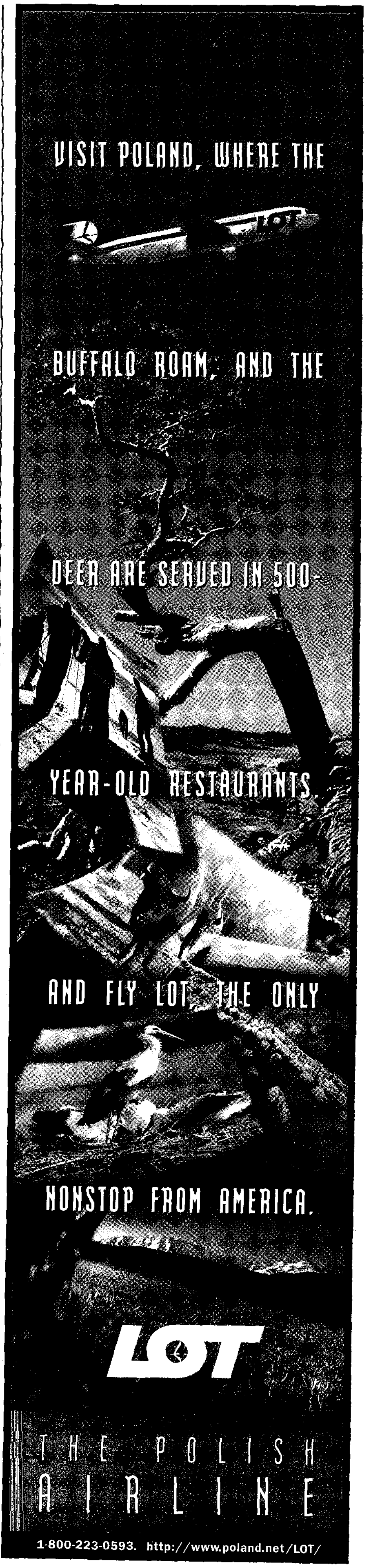
Tramps, 51 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—April 12: The **subdudes,** a New Orleans-based R. &. B.-and-rock ensemble that, like NRBQ, has had more success pleasing critics and other musicians (they backed up Shawn Colvin on her last studio album, and singer Tommy Malone performed on Rosanne Cash's latest release) than finding an audience. They are a sensational live band. Contractual strictures have prevented the members of **golden smog** (April 13) from using their real names on "Down by the Old Mainstream," but their aliases tend to go up in smoke once you hear the folksy twang of Wilco singer Jeff Tweady or the sweet reedy voice of Gary Louris, the guitarist of the recently disbanded Jayhawks. Together with Dan Murphy, the more grounded songwriting member of Soul Asylum, and a few other pals from the Minneapolis scene, they've created a sort of harmonic convergence that occasionally bests their respective bands. With mandolin, harmonica, and homespun charm, Golden Smog epitomizes the best of the current roots-rock revival, and the band's début disk mirrors the spirit of the Highwaymen, to whom it's dedicated.

Webster Hall, 125 E. 11th St. (353-1600)—A byzantine disco wonderland with four floors, a coffee shop, and a wig boutique. Wednesday is drag night. Psychedelic Thursdays feature grunge acts and cheap beer.

Wetlands, 161 Hudson St. (966-4225)—April 13: Merl Saunders and the Rainforest Band. April 15: Big Ass Truck.

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

Algonquin Hotel, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—Just after the first song of his swinging set at the Oak Room, guitarist and vocalist **john pizzarelli** (April 15-16) often tells the crowd



how great it is to be back in the hippest jazz joint in New York: "I hear Charlie Parker used to hang out here." His brother Martin, the bassist, whispers something in his ear. "Oh, wait. That was *Dorothy* Parker—well, she was hip, too." An agile musician and a pleasant low-key crooner from the Chet Baker/Alfalfa school, he is solidly backed by Ray Kennedy on piano, making this the best-sounding cabaret act in town. Dining.

BLUE NOTE, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Through April 14: the **JOE SAMPLE** trio. Brazilian star **IVAN LINS** takes over on April 16. Lins's failure to cross over onto the American charts is something of a blessing for fans of his hip, intelligent songwriting. His most recent record, "Awa Yio," is a feast of jazzy salsa grooves and velvety Portuguese melodies. Dining.

BRADLEY'S, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—Through April 13: piano and bass with **GEORGE CABLES** and **SANTI DEBRIANO.** Dining.

CARLYLE HOTEL, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—**BARBARA COOK** is in command of this urbane dinner-and-music room through mid-October, backed up by her longtime pianist and arranger, Wally Harper. Her voice remains almost defiantly that of the nineteen-fifties Broadway ingénue, and her material is as winning as a fresh corsage. . . ¶ Across the hall, in Bemelmans Bar, the suave and sybaritic **PETER MINTUN** is in attendance.

FIFTY SEVEN FIFTY SEVEN, 57 E. 57th St. (758-5757)—A cool, sumptuous piano-and-bass room in the Four Seasons Hotel, with twenty-two-foot-high ceilings, a long backlit bar stocked with single-malt Scotch, and fine jazz seven nights a week. Dining.

IRIDIUM, 44 W. 63rd St. (582-2121)—Rhythm and blues has arrived in the canny and capable hands of **RUTH BROWN** (through April 15). She has assembled a topflight quintet, whose members play solid R. & B. while she talks about her career triumphs, thanks her doctor, thanks someone who helped pay for her doctor, begs the critics in the audience to give her good reviews, makes allusions to her dress size, her age, and how long it takes her makeup man to do her face, introduces some flamenco dancer sitting ringside, and touches on other smart things and people too numerous to mention. Then she launches into an inspired version of Ellington's "I'm a Lucky So and So"—and it's only the third number. She is talented and true to her art. She hits all her notes, gets all her laughs, is wise and eclectic and vulnerable without being mawkish, and she knows how to put together a real night-club act. **MAX ROACH,** the most melodic of all drummers, and one of the few percussionists who can sustain a solo performance, swings by with his quartet on April 16.

KNITTING FACTORY, 74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—**JOHN ZORN AND MASADA** continue through April 13. From Benny Goodman and Stan Getz to Ziggy Ellman and Al Cohn, jazz has been home to prominent Jewish musicians who play in an idiomatically correct manner. The Masada ensemble examines Jewish musical traditions in an improvisatory climate. While Eastern European klezmer and the free jazz of Ornette Coleman aren't often mentioned in the same breath, in Zorn's hands their similarities—wrenching dirges, polyphony, modal melodies both lyrical and feverish—cohere and form a new music. Swollen with deep folk spirit but completely unsentimental, the project blends Zorn's gift for experimentation and play with his abiding (if often twisted) reverence for tradition. Masada, which uses the same pianoless instrumentation as the classic early Coleman units, is made up of serious improvisers—Zorn on alto sax, Greg Cohen on bass, Joey Barron on drums, and Dave Douglas on trumpet—who turn out this warped roots music with conviction and (dare we say the word below Houston Street?) love.

RAINBOW & STARS, 30 Rockefeller Plaza (632-5000)—At the start of his career, in the post-war forties and fifties, **VIC DAMONE** (through late April) embodied the placid opulence of the era: he was polite and handsome, and his voice was as smooth and lustrous as silk taffeta (and just as stiff). He had a little success in Hollywood and a bit more on vinyl, but more than anything else it's the years of supper clubs and casinos that have given him the distinctive ease that all the Bill Murrays and Harry Connicks of the world can only parody or covet. He doesn't swing, but his phrasing is conversational, and the voice itself is still something to marvel at. . . . ¶ Across the hall, in the Rainbow Room, there's a revolving dance floor, plus swinging big-band music courtesy of the Rainbow Room Orchestra, featuring vocalists Sean Mahony and Claudette Sierra. Closed Mondays.

SWEET BASIL, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—Through April 14: **PAUL MOTIAN'S ELECTRIC BEBOP.** The drummer's two-guitar-and-two-sax band is far more successful than you'd think. A smart selection of tunes, from Parker and Mingus classics to Motian's own moody originals, gets a serious and energetic treatment. This is not fusion. Repeat: this is not fusion. Starting April 16: the Larry Willis quintet. Dining.

VILLAGE VANGUARD, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—Through April 14: the **GEORGE COLEMAN** quartet. Coleman is a marvel; there isn't a sax player who knows his instrument better, or one who imparts so much knowledge in every marathon solo. The **CHRISTIAN MC BRIDE** quartet grabs a handful of bass starting April 16. The **VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA** holds sway on Mondays.

VISIONES, 125 Macdougal St., at W. 3rd St. (673-5576)—**STEPS AHEAD** entertain April 10-12. **GUST WILLIAM TSILIS,** who drops by April 12-13, is an ambitious player who's pushing the vibraphone into the next century and who also takes on the marimba. He has been perfecting a compelling style that moves beyond the terrain worked by Bobby Hutcherson and Gary Burton.

ZINNO, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—Through April 13: piano, bass, and guitar with **JOHN BUNCH, JAY LEONHART,** and **BUCKY PIZZARELLI.** Dining.

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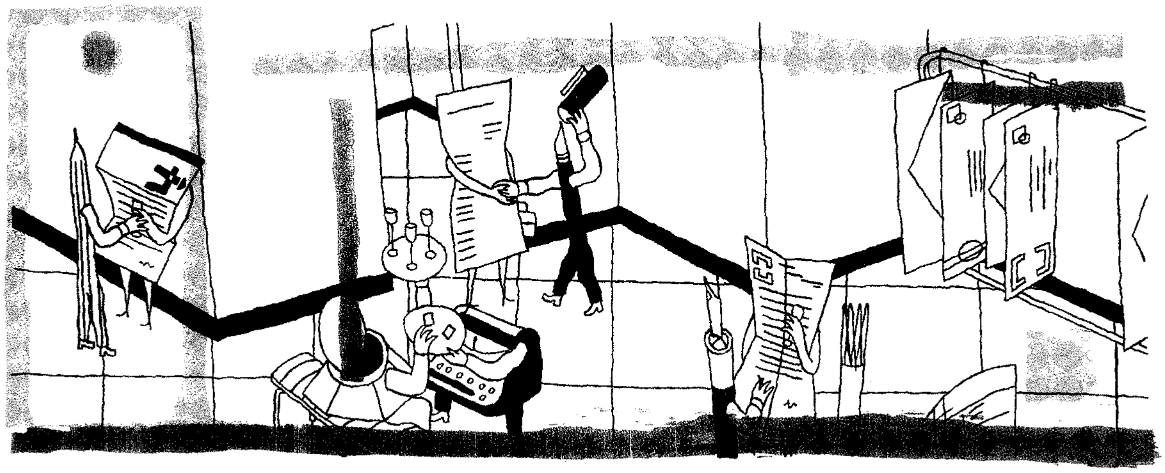
ART

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—"Splendors of Imperial China." The most magnificent exhibition of the season—a superbly mounted selection of more than four hundred objects from the National Palace Museum, in Taipei—amounts to a fairly complete synopsis of Chinese art in all mediums. The objects range from Neolithic jade disks to decadent, Western-influenced paintings from the reign (1736-95) of the Ch'ien-lung emperor, whose personal collection forms the basis of the Palace Museum's holdings. The level of connoisseurship is unsurpassed. A porcelain bowl, vase, and dish from the Sung dynasty, all three in robin's-egg blue, approach perfection. The zestful immediacy of a scroll by the Zen calligrapher Huai-su, done in a style known to scholars as "wild cursive," may owe something to his habit of getting drunk as he worked. Most impressive of all are the nearly life-size imperial portraits, which are rendered with a razor-sharp clarity. The one of T'ai-tsu, the founder of the Sung dynasty—a mountainous man in a white robe and a little black cap—proclaims majesty and an unwavering belief that China will endure forever. Who would argue? Through May 19. . . . ¶ "Bare Witness: Clothing and Nudity," a history of concealment and exposure in fashion since the eighteenth century, is on view in the Costume Institute. . . . ¶ "Fabergé in America." Fifteen of the forty-four extant imperial Easter eggs are on view in this exhibit of works from American collections, along with more than four hundred baskets, vases, table clocks, cigarette boxes, and other delights. Through April 28. . . . ¶ Sixteenth- to eighteenth-century paintings, textiles, and metalwork from the Deccan, the plateau region of south-central India, are on view in "Art of the Deccani Sultans." . . . ¶ "Enamels of Limoges," a slew of precious objects—medallions, reliquaries, portable altars, and such—dating from the twelfth century through the fourteenth, from the French town's abbey workshops. Through June 16. . . . ¶ Lesser-known and experimental color prints by artists employed by the W.P.A. Through May 26. . . . ¶ "Picturing Paradise: Colonial Photography of Samoa, 1875-1925." (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)



"The Avant-Garde Letterhead," early-twentieth-century stationery, at the American Institute of Graphic Arts.

LAURENT CILLUFFO

Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St.—"Brancusi," a tantalizing mini-retrospective of twenty-four sculptures that represent the master at his best: the wood-and-limestone "Exotic Plant," at once primitive and unspeakably sophisticated; two big, comical oak cups; a set of four tilted heads, in bronze, plaster, and wood, so dreamy that you almost drift away; and the sublime gray marble "Fish." Through April 23. . . . ¶ A large retrospective of black-and-white photographs from the late forties to the present by Roy DeCarava. Among the subjects are jazz musicians, street and subway life, and urban civil-rights protests. Through May 7. . . . ¶ "Come Sunday: Photographs by Thomas Roma." Strikingly candid black-and-white pictures of African-American parishioners deep in prayer in Brooklyn churches. Through June 18. . . . ¶ Three video works by Hirsch Perlman, with photographs and text, are in the "Projects" space. Through May 21. (Open Saturdays through Tuesdays, 11 to 6; Thursdays and Fridays, noon to 8:30.)

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—"Abstraction in the Twentieth Century: Total Risk, Freedom, Discipline." This exhibition is chockablock with masterpieces—from early Kandinskys and Maleviches to the mute totems of minimalism which have dominated abstract art since the sixties—but some of the elisions are galling. Where are Hans Hofmann, Kenneth Noland, Morris Louis? Why so few women? Why *nine* Rymans but not even one Marden? And why no artists who came to the fore after the seventies? In short, a beautiful failure. Through May 12. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 10 to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 8.)

Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—A retrospective of a hundred assemblages, constructed from scavenged street and flea-market materials, by Edward Kienholz (1927-94) and Nancy Reddin Kienholz. Through June 2. . . . ¶ "An American Story," a chronological survey of twentieth-century painting and sculpture, both well-known and obscure, from the museum's collection. (Open Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8.)

American Museum of Natural History, Central Park W. at 79th St.—Large-format black-and-white and color photographs documenting a hundred endangered North American plants and animals. . . . ¶ "Amber: Window to the Past." Through Sept. 2. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway—A large number of paintings, sculptures, costumes, and religious objects from the viceroyalties of New Spain and Peru are on view in "Converging Cultures: Art & Identity in Spanish America." Through July 14. . . . ¶ Seventy paintings by the American Thomas Wilmer Dewing (1851-1938), whose atmospheric landscapes and genre scenes of ladies in drawing rooms exhibit a distinctive treatment of space. Through June 9. . . . ¶ "Alone in a Crowd: Prints by African-American Artists from the 1930s-1940s." Through April 21. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

American Institute of Graphic Arts, 164 Fifth Ave., at 22nd St. —"The Avant-Garde Letterhead." Italian Futurists, Russian Constructivists, and members of the Bauhaus gave voice to the avant-garde in letters written on letterheads they designed themselves. On view here are numerous examples of writing paper, envelopes, postcards, and other scrivened ephemera by such artists and designers as Tristan Tzara, Kurt Schwitters, Herbert Bayer, and Laszlo Moholy-Nagy. Organized by the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum. Through May 8. (Open Mondays through Fridays, noon to 6; Saturdays, noon to 5.)

Frick Collection, 1 E. 70th St.—"Greuze: A Portraitist for the '90s." Jean-Baptiste Greuze (1725-1805) was widely celebrated for his sentimental, moralizing genre scenes—Diderot lauded his work as an antidote to the frivolity of Boucher—but by the close of the eighteenth century his reputation was already on the wane. This small but choice exhibition covers only the tumultuous decade that witnessed the Revolution and its aftermath, and focusses on two recently acquired pastels, companion portraits of the famous comic actor Baptiste Aîné and his wife. Through April 14. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6; Sundays, 1 to 6.)

Morgan Library, 29 E. 36th St.—"A Great Heritage" comprises a hundred and three of the best sheets in the Duke of Devonshire's collection of works on paper and includes some of the greatest drawings by Leonardo, Raphael, Rembrandt, and Rubens. Through April 21. . . . ¶ "The Art of the Brontës," a fascinating roomful of drawings, manuscripts, and juvenilia by Anne, Charlotte, Emily, and their brother, Branwell, as well as some of their personal effects. Through April 14. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 10:30 to 5; Saturdays, 10:30 to 6; Sundays, noon to 6.)

The New Museum, 583 Broadway—"A Labor of Love" includes works by contemporary artists who use folk- or craft-oriented processes. Among the pieces on view are miniature chairs carved out of soap, by Michael Harms; sewn banana-peel slippers, by Nöle Guilini; cartoonish dolls, by Faith Ringgold; and Liza Lou's full-sized kitchen, entirely covered with small colored beads. Through April 14. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 6, and Saturday evenings until 8.)

New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St.—Visitors to "The Global Library—http://www.nypl.org" can step up to one of fourteen computer stations and embark on a guided tour of the World Wide Web. (Or, if you prefer, you can visit the exhibit's Web site from home.) Also on display are a host of nonvirtual objects, such as Sumerian cuneiform tablets, Chinese woodblock prints, a Gutenberg Bible, and the 1727 "New England Primer." (Open Mondays, and Thursdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6; Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 11 to 6.)

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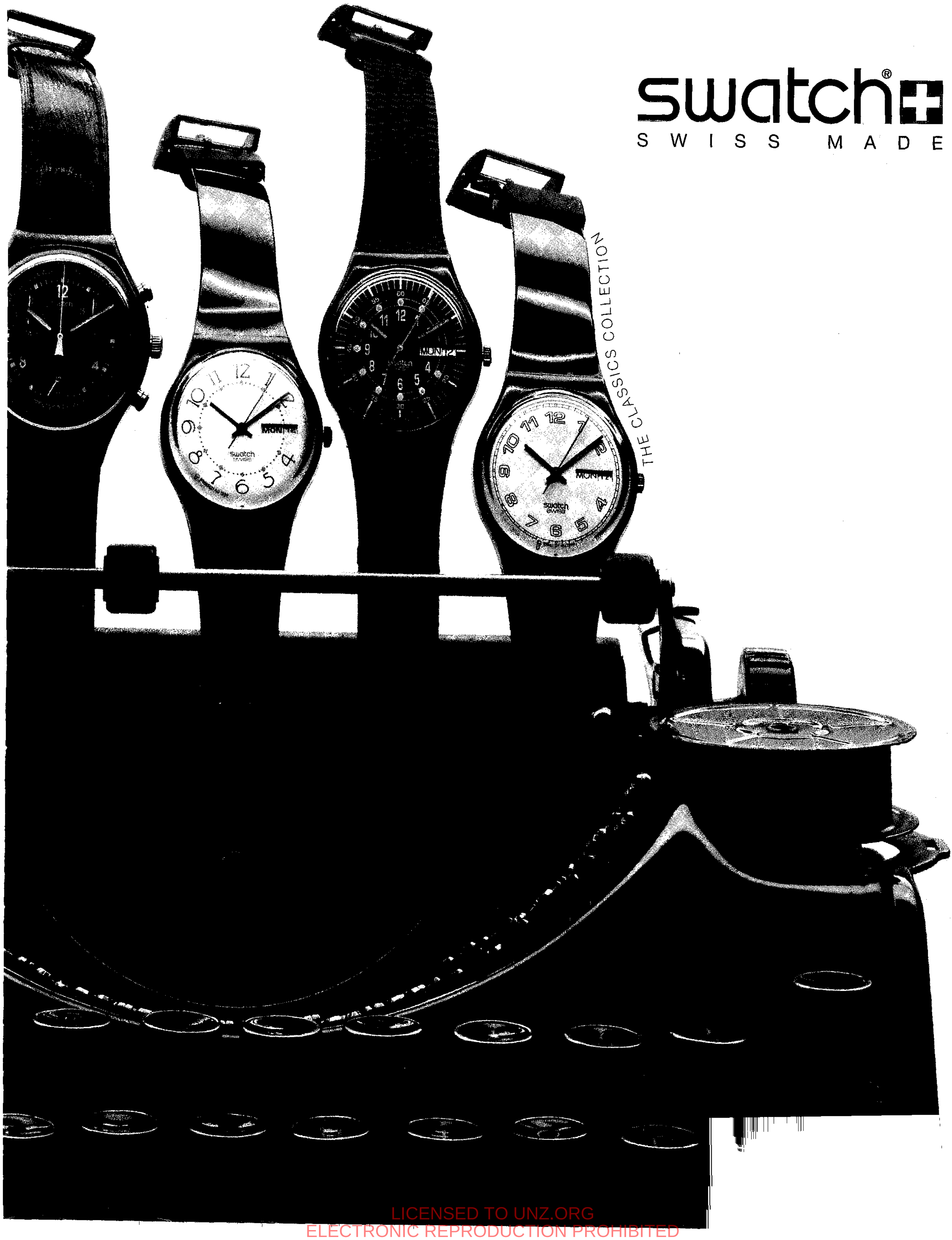
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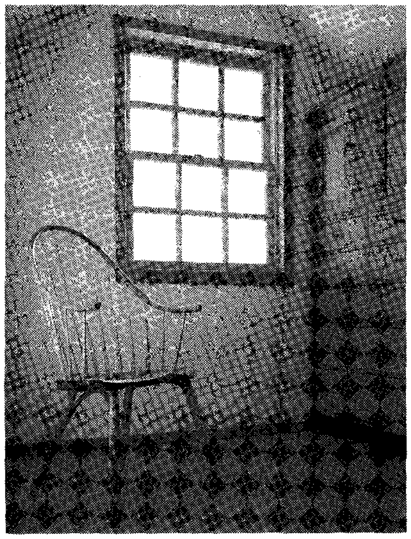

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GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

JIM DINE—The sculptures of antiquity inspired the artists of the Renaissance; now a modern master offers his take on these touchstones of the Western tradition in "Some Greeks, Some Romans," a suite of a hundred and fifty drawings. Ranging from straightforward charcoal or pencil studies to heavily built-up Expressionistic drawings in pastels, chalk, and crayon, Dine's draftsmanly tour de force demonstrates a profoundly humanistic sensibility and considerable technical virtuosity. Through April 27. (Pace Wildenstein, 32 E. 57th St.)

MARINA KARELLA—Smallish, blurry, exceedingly pretty canvases evocative of both Ross Bleckner's and Gerhard Richter's work. How's that for cunning pastiche? The paintings feature moody interiors, sometimes with a suggestion of a human presence, pointing toward high-concept contemporary notions while remaining emotionally quite accessible. Through April 18. (McGrath, 20 W. 57th St.)

JACQUES LIPCHITZ (1891-1973) / **"CUBIST PRINTS"**—A chronological survey of sculptures from 1911 to 1939. The earliest of them suggest a sinuous (and frankly rather silly) Art Nouveau aesthetic; the mature ones are indebted to Cubism and also display affinities with Giacometti, Ernst, and even the Russian Constructivists. Lipchitz was an extremely capable synthesizer of the School of Paris's stylistic trends, and his best work is quite beautiful. / Prints, drawings, and illustrated books from 1909 to 1928, by Braque, Picasso, Gris, Léger, Villon, and others. Both shows through April 13. (Marlborough, 40 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

"THE ART OF IVORY"—Ivory sculptures in Brazil? This remarkable exhibition of carvings from the Museu Histórico Nacional, in Rio de Janeiro, comprises a hundred and thirty superb examples of what may have been the first truly global art. Early-sixteenth-century Portuguese missionaries to Goa and Ceylon commissioned local craftsmen to carve traditional Christian images in ivory; these found their way to the Portuguese colony of Brazil on circumnavigating trader ships. The sculptures, which piquantly blend European and Asian sensibilities, are exquisitely wrought and curious in the extreme. A reclining Christ child echoes the familiar image of the sleeping Buddha; a touching little St. Sebastian, pinned to his tree, evokes Shiva's incarnation as Lord of the Cosmic Dance. Through April 28. (Americas Society, Park Ave. at 68th St. Open daily, except Mondays, noon to 6.)

"THE MUSEUM OF NON-OBJECTIVE PAINTING—AMERICAN ABSTRACT ART"—Paintings and works on paper from the thirties and forties, originally from the collection of Solomon R. Guggenheim. Almost all of them have a dated, derivative air; the influence of Kandinsky and neoplasticism is especially evident. The show makes an excellent companion to the Guggenheim's current "Abstraction in the Twentieth Century"—it's worth recalling the forgotten corners of modernism as well as the high points. Through April 27. (Snyder, 20 W. 57th St.)

SHORT LIST—**ARMAN,** Janis, 110 W. 57th St. Through April 27. . . . **MILTON AVERY,** Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St., and Long, 24 W. 57th St. Both shows through April 27. . . . **WILL BARNET,** Dintenfass, 20 E. 79th St. Through April 27. . . . **GEORG BASELITZ,** Werner, 21 E. 67th St. Open Mondays; through April 27. . . . **KATHERINE BOWLING,** Helman, 20 W. 57th St. Through May 4. . . . **SUE COE,** Galerie St. Etienne, 24 W. 57th St. Through May 24. . . . **WILLEM DE KOONING,** C & M Arts, 45 E. 78th St. Through June 1. . . . **ROBERT GRAHAM,** Gagosian, 980 Madison Ave., at 76th St. Through April 20. . . . **AL HELD,** Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St. Through May 11. . . . **JUDY LEDGERWOOD,** Feigen, 49 E. 68th St. Open Mondays; through May 4. . . . **AGNES MARTIN,** Pace Wildenstein, 32 E. 57th St. Through April 27. . . . **JOSEPH MC GURL,** Taggart, 48 E. 73rd St. Through April 13. . . . **JOAN MITCHELL,** Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St. Through May 4. . . . **RICHARD SERRA,** Marks, 1018 Madison Ave., at 79th St. Through April 13. . . . **JOAN SNYDER,** Hirschl & Adler Modern, 21 E. 70th St. Through May 11. . . . **TOM WESSELMANN,** Janis, 110 W. 57th St. Through May 4. . . . **KRZYSZTOF WODICZKO,** Galerie Lelong, 20 W. 57th St. Through April 27.

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

GARY SIMMONS—Three huge wall drawings on chalkboard—a roller coaster, a gazebo, a cartoonish explosion—and several smaller, related works on paper. The artist handles the difficulty inherent in working on this scale with impressive élan, continuing to exploit his signature style—smudged or erased chalk—while retreating from the didacticism of his earlier work, most of which drew on racial stereotypes. Through April 13. (Metro Pictures, 150 Greene St.)

ROBERT THERRIEN / **CHRYSSA**—An amusing, agreeably perplexing fantasy: a thirty-five-foot-long bed spirals above the gallery floor in an impossible loop-de-loop, like a surrealistic flourish out of a Bugs Bunny cartoon. / Elegant scrolls of aluminum and neon from a pioneer light sculptor. Both shows through April 13. (Castelli, 420 West Broadway.)

MEG WEBSTER—It's billed as a drawing show, but it certainly challenges conventional notions of the medium. Webster became prominent in the eighties as a sort of neo-earthworks artist, building imposing installations of salt, soil, and wax. For her "drawings," she uses egg, sugar, blood, chocolate, butter, or even cascading water. While a shiny rectangle of molasses on paper reflects the viewer—dimly, distortedly—many of the works exhibit the impassive, opaque materiality of Richard Serra's oil-stick drawings. Hmm. Through April 26. (Morris Healy, 530 W. 22nd St. Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6.)

ERIC WOLF—Landscape paintings rendered in heavy, looping, somewhat schematic black brushstrokes against white grounds; at times the figurative elements—trees, rocks, clouds, streams—are virtually lost in dense whorls of abstract patterning. Richter's and Lichtenstein's deconstructions of the brushstroke, as well as Peter Nagy's more recent photocopy paintings, loom as obvious precursors. Through April 21. (Fredericks, 504 W. 22nd St. Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6.)

"FANTASTIC SH*T"—Simon Grennan and Christopher Sperandio met in Chicago in 1988 and have been collaborators ever since, even though Grennan lives in Manchester, England, and Sperandio in New York (lots of faxes and E-mail). Their comic books, photographs, and other objects, made with the input of dentists, museum staffers, and even chocolate-factory workers, call the idea of authorship on the carpet. For this show, the artists asked readers of newspapers in Glasgow, New York, and Bordeaux to send in anecdotes of supernatural experiences; they then selected the most visually promising stories, which appear here in the form of large framed 3-D posters. Through April 13. (American Fine Arts, 22 Wooster St.)

"CAN YOU DIGIT?"—A millennial video arcade for the mind (and it doesn't require quarters), this glimpse into interactivity is so engaging that it almost makes you look forward to the nerdy future. Predictably, there's a lot of political posturing, but there's also a great deal of ingenuity and fun. "Martyr," a hilarious game by Don Farnsworth and John Nava, invites the player to deflect arrows aimed at the torso of Mantegna's St. Sebastian. Ken Feingold satirizes the medium with an image of a Howdy Doody-like puppet's head, its jaw flapping, caught in a nightmarish maelstrom of icons whirling by so fast that it's almost impossible to double-click on them—but if you do, you can shut up the puppet. Through April 13. (Postmasters, 80 Greene St.)

SHORT LIST—**NANCY BALLIETT,** Atlantic, 475 Broome St. Open daily, except Mondays, noon to 6; through April 27. . . . **WILL BERRY,** Arstark, 568

Broadway. Through May 11. . . . **DAN FLAVIN,** Pace Wildenstein, 142 Greene St. Through April 27. . . . **DON GUMMER,** Sperone Westwater, 121 Greene St. Through May 4. . . . **GEORGE HO,** 163 Mercer, 163 Mercer St. Through April 27. . . . **KCHO,** Gladstone, 99 Greene St. Through April 20. . . . **PENNY KRONENGOLD,** First Street Gallery, 560 Broadway. Through April 13. . . . **JONATHAN LASKER,** Sperone Westwater, 142 Greene St. Through April 27. . . . **CHARLES LE DRAY,** Gorney, 100 Greene St. Through May 11. . . . **LARRY MANTELLO,** Wittels, 580 Broadway. Through April 20. . . . **JACK PIERSON,** Luhring Augustine, 130 Prince St. Through May 4. . . . **MIA WESTERLUND ROOSEN,** Lennon, Weinberg, 560 Broadway. Through April 27. . . . **ERIKA ROTHENBERG,** P.P.O.W, 532 Broadway. Through April 20. . . . **PETER SCHUYFF,** Shafrazi, 119 Wooster St. Through April 20. . . . **MEYER VAISMAN,** 303 Gallery, 89 Greene St. Through April 20. . . . **KARA WALKER,** Wooster Gardens, 558 Broadway. Through April 13. . . . **ROBERT WILSON,** Cooper, 155 Wooster St. Through April 27. . . . **ROB WYNNE,** Holly Solomon, 172 Mercer St. Through May 4.

AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES

CHRISTIE'S—April 12: English furniture. . . . ¶ April 13: A wine auction that includes vintages sure to make œnophiles go weak in the knees: 1945 Mouton-Rothschild, 1961 Pétrus, 1985 Romanée-Conti (several cases of the latter are expected to sell for fifteen to twenty thousand dollars each). . . . ¶ April 15-16: Jewelry from the collection of the late Joanne Toor Cummings. The pièce de résistance is a pair of earrings comprising two blue and two white flawless diamonds with a total weight of 29.5 carats. (Park Ave. at 59th St. 546-1000.)

SOTHEBY'S—A "celebration of the English country house" brings furnishings to the block. April 12: Sporting and marine art, portraiture, and landscape paintings. . . . ¶ April 13: Furniture. . . . ¶ April 16: Silver. . . . **NOTE:** Sotheby's is also hosting several daylong seminars on the country-house theme. (York Ave. at 72nd St. 606-7000.)

SWANN'S—An auction of books about books. (104 E. 25th St. 254-4710. April 11 at 10:30.)

PHOTOGRAPHY

FERENC BERKO—Pictures from the thirties and forties, including many glamorous nudes, light-handed photojournalistic images made in European capitals and in India, semi-abstract views of Chicago, and pioneering color work from 1947 to 1949. Through May 4. (Richardson, 560 Broadway.)

LEONARD FREED—"Collected Poems," a retrospective of this Magnum photographer's career. Through April 24. (Leica, 670 Broadway. Opens Saturdays at noon.)

WILLIAM KLEIN—An exhibit of previously unpublished pictures from "New York 1954.55," a reëdited and redesigned version of the photographer's 1956 book, "Life Is Good and Good for You in New York." Through May 11. (Greenberg and Gallery 292, 120 Wooster St.)

IRVING PENN—Portraits and still-lifes from throughout the artist's career, including twenty-three silver, platinum, and Cibachrome prints not shown before and recent experimental works. Through May 11. (Pace Wildenstein MacGill, 32 E. 57th St.)

PAUL STRAND (1890-1976)—Portraits of the artist's wife, Rebecca Salsbury, taken and printed between 1920 and 1932. Through May 4. (Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St.)

INTERNATIONAL CENTER OF PHOTOGRAPHY, 1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St.—"Josef Sudek: The Pigment Prints, 1947-1954." Still-lifes of eggs and bread, glasses of water and beer, nudes, Prague castles and gardens, all of them contact prints made with charcoal, carbon, and carbro processes. Through July 7. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

INTERNATIONAL CENTER OF PHOTOGRAPHY MIDTOWN, Sixth Ave. at 43rd St.—"Horst: A Retro-

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spective." Elegant, meticulous fashion photography is his hallmark, but this comprehensive survey also includes portraits (Dietrich, Cocteau, Chanel), society interiors, abstract studies, and nudes. Through June 2.... ¶ "Intimate Nature: Ansel Adams and the Close View." Closeups that complement the artist's panoramic visions. Through June 2. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

"CHICAGO PHOTOGRAPHY, 1935-1965"—Pictures by thirty artists who worked and taught in the "city of the big shoulders," including Moholy-Nagy, Kepes, Siegel, Callahan, Siskind, Metzker, and Ishimoto. Through May 31. (Danziger, 130 Prince St.)

SHORT LIST—**RICHARD ARTSCHWAGER,** Saul, 560 Broadway. Through April 27.... **UTA BARTH,** Bonakdar, 130 Prince St. Through April 20.... **PAUL CAPONIGRO,** Schmidt Bingham, 41 E. 57th St. Through April 27.... **JED DEVINE,** Benrubi, 52 E. 76th St. Through April 13.... **CONNIE IMBODEN** and **VICTOR FRIEDMAN,** Witkin, 415 West Broadway. Through April 13.... **FRANK MAJORE,** Borden, 560 Broadway. Through April 27.... **RAY K. METZKER** and **THOMAS BARROW,** Laurence Miller, 138 Spring St. Through April 13.... **MARK MORRISROE,** Hearn, 530 W. 22nd St. Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6; through April 28.... **RICHARD POUSETTE-DART,** Zabriskie, 41 E. 57th St. Through April 13.... **BASTIENNE SCHMIDT,** Throckmorton, 153 E. 61st St. Through May 18.... **ARTHUR TRESS,** Houk Friedman, 851 Madison Ave., at 70th St. Through May 11.... **DAVID VESTAL,** Mann, 42 E. 76th St. Through April 27.

(See the museum listings for photography exhibitions at the Metropolitan Museum, the Museum of Modern Art, and the American Museum of Natural History.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC

(The box-office number for Carnegie Hall and Weill Recital Hall is 247-7800, and for Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St., 501-3330.)

OPERA

METROPOLITAN OPERA—**LA BOHÈME,** with Angela Gheorghiu, Karita Mattila, Roberto Alagna (the French tenor, in his much anticipated Metropolitan début), and William Shimmel; conducted by Simone Young. (April 10 and April 13 at 8.) . . . **THE VOYAGE,** by Philip Glass. (April 11 at 8.) . . . **ROMÉO ET JULIETTE,** by Gounod, with Ruth Ann Swenson and Richard Leech; Edoardo Müller. (April 12 at 8.) . . . **ANDREA CHÉNIER,** with Aprile Millo, Luciano Pavarotti, and Juan Pons; James Levine. (April 13 at 1:30 and April 16 at 8.) . . . **DIE WALKÜRE,** with Gabriele Schnaut, Deborah Voigt, Hanna Schwarz, Plácido Domingo, Robert Hale, and John Macurdy; Mr. Levine. (April 15 at 6:30.) (Metropolitan Opera House. 362-6000.)

NEW YORK CITY OPERA—**ATTILA.** (April 10 at 8.) . . . **THE DREYFUS AFFAIR.** (April 11 at 8.) . . . **THE MIKADO.** (April 12 at 8.) . . . **THE MERRY WIDOW,** performed in English. (April 13 at 1:30.) . . . **RIGOLETTO.** (April 13 at 8.) . . . **THE MAGIC FLUTE,** in English. (April 14 at 1:30.) (New York State Theatre. 870-5570.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC—Valery Gergiev conducts Rimsky-Korsakov's "The Maid of Pskov" Overture and Prokofiev's Symphony No. 2. The orchestra's concertmaster, Glenn Dicterow, is spotlighted in Chausson's "Poème" and Ravel's "Tzigane." (Avery Fisher Hall. 875-5030. April 11 and April 13 at 8, April 12 at 2, and April 16 at 7:30.)

BOSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA—The orchestra notes the twentieth anniversary of the end of the Vietnam War with performances of Elliot Goldenthal's "Fire Water Paper: A Vietnam Oratorio," with the Tanglewood Festival Chorus, the New York Concert Singers' Project Youth Chorus, and soloists Jayne West (soprano) and James Maddalena (baritone). Also on the program are works by Mozart and Stravinsky, including arias sung by soprano Kathleen Battle. Seiji Ozawa conducts. (Carnegie Hall. April 10-11 at 8.)

AMERICAN COMPOSERS ORCHESTRA—Concluding concerts of the annual Sonidos de las Americas festival, which this year has focussed on Brazil. April 10 at 8: The A.C.O. Chamber Ensemble, with many guest performers, offers music by seven contemporary Brazilian composers. (Weill Recital Hall.) . . . ¶ April 11 at 8: Paul Lustig Dunkel leads the A.C.O. Chamber Orchestra in the première of Edino Krieger's Concerto for Two Guitars (featuring the Duo Assad), among other works. (New School, 66 W. 12th St. 229-5690.) . . . ¶ April 14 at 3: Cristina Ortiz is the soloist in Mozart Camargo Guarnieri's "Chôro," for piano and orchestra. Works by Paulo Chagas, Marlos Nobre, Egberto Gismonti, and Villa-Lobos complete the program. Dennis Russell Davies conducts. (Carnegie Hall.)

BACH CHOIR OF LONDON AND FAIRFIELD ORCHESTRA—David Willcocks directs the English choristers and the American period-instrument ensemble in Bach's Magnificat, Elgar's Serenade for Strings, and Handel's Four "Coronation" Anthems. (Avery Fisher Hall. 875-5030. April 14 at 3.)

DRESDEN STAATSKAPELLE—At Carnegie Hall. Giuseppe Sinopoli conducts music by Richard Strauss. April 15 at 8: "Metamorphosen" (for twenty-three solo strings) and "Eine Alpensinfonie." . . . ¶ April 16 at 8: The tone poems "Don Juan" and "Ein Heldenleben," as well as the "Four Last Songs" (with soprano Cheryl Studer).

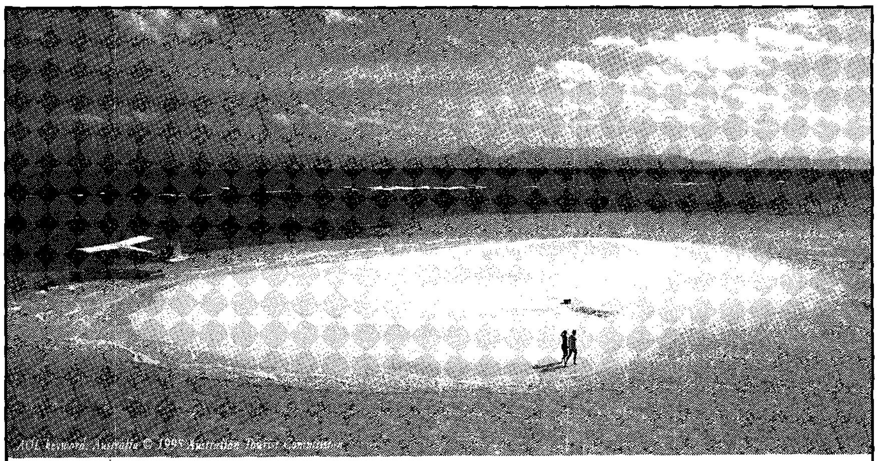
RECITALS

BARGEMUSIC—Pianist and composer Joel Hoffman is joined by his three siblings—violist Toby, cellist Gary, and harpist Deborah—in the première of his latest work, "The Music Within the Words Part Two." Also on the program are solo and chamber works by Handel, Marcel Grandjany, Hindemith, and Schubert (his "Arpeggione" Sonata). (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 1-718 624-4061. April 11 at 7:30 and April 14 at 4.)

RICHARD STOLTZMAN—The clarinettist performs Schumann's "Fantasiestücke," Berg's Four Pieces (Op. 5), and Brahms's Sonata No. 2 and Clarinet Quintet, assisted by pianist Irma Vallecillo and the Chilingirian String Quartet. Though Ms. Vallecillo, a widely admired collaborative pianist, teacher, and administrator, is never inclined to steal the spotlight, many in the audience may be paying more than usual attention to her, since she was recently tapped to be the artistic director of the prestigious Gilmore International Keyboard Foundation. (Weill Recital Hall. April 12 at 8.)

SANDRA MILLER—Playing French music for the Baroque flute, by Couperin, Rameau, Jacques-Martin Hotteterre, and others. Harpsichordist James Richman and viola da gamba player Lisa Terry assist. (Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. 355-6160. April 12 at 8.)

CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY OF LINCOLN CENTER—Robert White's career was already flourishing in the nineteen-forties, when radio reigned supreme and more than a few prodigiously developed child-soprano voices spread their dimpled cheer across the airwaves. The boy's voice eventually deepened to a tenor, and some decades later, his career continues at full tilt. This winter alone, his entry in the CD catalogues was augmented by a splendid recital of Edwardian parlor music ("Bird Songs at Eventide," on Hyperion), a four-disk retrospective ("The Greatest Songs Ever Written," on Song Lion Productions), and a character role (as the barber) on Sony's delightful new "Man of La Mancha." And his joint recital (with Joan Morris and Wil-



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liam Bolcom) of Vincent Youmans standards (on Arabesque) arrives in the stores this month. These concerts will feature him in a set of six Scottish songs, arranged for solo voice and chamber ensemble by Weber. Also on the program are Piazzolla's "Histoire du Tango," Dvořák's Piano Quartet in E-Flat Major, and the première of a quintet by Kenneth Frazelle. (Alice Tully Hall. 875-5050. April 12 at 8 and April 14 at 5.)

Continuum—The modern-music group presents five works by the Russian composer Galina Ustvolskaya, a Shostakovich protégée with a cult following. (Merkin Concert Hall. April 13 at 8:30.)

"Mirror Visions"—Soprano Tobé Malawista, baritone Scott Murphree, and pianist Richard Lalli in a recital that presents multiple song settings (by Tom Cipullo, Daron Hagen, Richard Hundley, Déodat de Séverac, and many others) of identical texts (by Shakespeare, Poe, and Lewis Carroll, among others). (Weill Recital Hall. April 14 at 2.)

Anonymous Four—The vocal quartet performs music from the Codex Calixtinus, the twelfth-century repository of devotional pieces sung by pilgrims making their way to the Galician shrine of Santiago de Compostela. (The Cloisters, Fort Tryon Park. 650-2290. April 14 at 3.)

New York Philharmonic Ensembles—Members of the orchestra perform Ignaz Pleyel's C-Major Duo for Violin and Viola, Crumb's "Vox Balaenae (Voice of the Whale)," Amy Beach's Piano Trio, and Spohr's Octet (Op. 32). (Merkin Concert Hall. April 14 at 3.)

Pipe-O-Rama—At the stroke of six, as part of the centennial celebration of the American Guild of Organists, more than three hundred organs throughout the United States will boom forth with Bach's D-Minor Toccata and Fugue. (The celebration culminates this July, at the organization's national convention, in New York.) Following the Manhattan performance of the Toccata and Fugue, by Arthur Lawrence, the dean of the Guild's New York City chapter, a handful of the city's other prominent church organists—Justin Bischof, Kyler Brown, Richard Erickson, Mollie Nichols, Gwendolyn Toth, Keith Toth, and Kiyo Watanabe—will play. (Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Central Park West at 65th St. April 14 at 6. No tickets necessary.)

Ying String Quartet—The Illinois-born Yings—violinists Timothy and Janet, violist Philip, and cellist David—make up one of the most promising young quartets, elegantly blended and musically subtle. They're all first-generation musicians (as is a double bassist brother who decided not to go pro). They will perform quartets by Mendelssohn (in A Major, Op. 13), Sydney Hodkinson, and Brahms (in B-Flat Major, Op. 67). (Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center, 165 W. 65th St., plaza level. April 15 at 7:30. For information about tickets, call 875-5050.)

Marc-André Hamelin—The pianist, who has both a mind-boggling technique and a penchant for the sort of repertoire that puts it to use, performs an all-Liszt recital that includes three Hungarian Rhapsodies, the "Réminiscences de 'Norma,' " and, for a change of pace, a couple of introverted late works ("Nuages Gris" and "La Lugubre Gondole" No. 2). (Merkin Concert Hall. April 16 at 8.)

New York Festival of Song—Gremlins have gotten into the schedule again: Richard Strauss aficionados will be torn between this recital and the Dresden Staatskapelle concert that unrolls at the same time in Carnegie Hall's main auditorium. This will be the more intimate event, an exploration of obscure corners of the composer's lieder production, including the rarely performed "Krämerspiegel" cycle. (Weill Recital Hall. April 16 at 8.)

ALSO OF INTEREST

St. Luke's Chamber Ensemble: Presenting Ives's Piano Trio and the première of Stephen Jaffe's Chamber Concerto ("Singing Figures"). (Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 88th St. April 10 at 8. For information about tickets, call 840-7470.) . . . **Dicapo Opera Company:** Weill's "Threepenny Opera." (Dicapo Opera Theatre, 184 E. 76th St. 288-9438. April 12-13 at 8 and April 14 at 3. Through April 20.) . . . **Bach on the Island:** With violinist Eric Grossman and harpsichordist Eleonor Bindman. (Le Refuge Inn, 620 City Island Ave., City Island, the Bronx. 1-718 885-2478. April 14 at noon.) . . . **Verismo Opera Company:** Presenting Richard Owen's "The Death of the Virgin," on a double bill with "Cavalleria Rusticana." (Ethical Culture Society, 2 W. 64th St. April 14 at 3. For information about tickets, call 781-1920. Through April 21.) . . . **Ilya Kaler and Boris Slutsky:** Violinist and pianist, in a program that includes sonatas by Beethoven, Strauss, and Schnittke. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100. April 14 at 3.) . . . **All-Dvořák:** Soprano Eva Urbanová and the Kalichstein-Laredo-Robinson Trio are among the participants in a benefit concert. (Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church, Madison Ave. at 73rd St. April 14 at 3. For information about tickets, call 475-2850.) . . . **Lionheart and Parthenia:** The vocal sextet and the viol consort perform English Renaissance music. (Corpus Christi Church, 529 W. 121st St. 666-9266. April 14 at 4.) . . . **Lafayette String Quartet:** In a program that includes quartets by Beethoven (Op. 74) and Grieg. (Frick Collection, 1 E. 70th St. 288-0700. April 14 at 5.) . . . **Yuri Kim:** Pianist. (Hotel Wales, Madison Ave. at 92nd St. April 14 at 6 and 8. No tickets necessary.) . . . **Opera Manhattan:** French art songs and chamber music presented with choreography. (Merkin Concert Hall. April 14 at 8.) . . . **Los Angeles Guitar Quartet.** (Kaye Playhouse, Hunter College, Park Ave. at 68th St. 772-4448. April 15 at 8.) . . . **Cygnus Ensemble:** Presenting new works by five composers, including Anthony Braxton and Sebastian Currier. (Merkin Concert Hall. April 15 at 8.) . . . **Jed Distler:** Performing piano versions by contemporary composers (including Frederic Rzewski and Lois V Vierk) of pop music from the nineteen-sixties. (Bloomingdale House, 323 W. 108th St. April 16 at 7. For information about tickets, call 663-6021.)

Centennial celebrations at the Aquarium.

DANIEL MAJA

ABOVE AND BEYOND

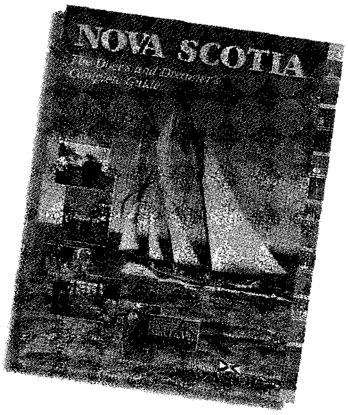
The Aquarium Turns One Hundred—On land, penguins invite a certain amount of derision, but underwater, in the Sea Cliffs exhibit at Coney Island's Aquarium for Wildlife Conservation, they turn into torpedoes in tuxedos, careering about their tank at speeds of up to twenty miles an hour. Their neighbors, the Pacific walruses, loom against the glass partitions like battleships, and the California sea otters a few steps away flip and nose-dive as exuberantly as if they'd studied with Esther Williams. Outdoors, the bottlenose dolphins dazzle audiences at their shows in the Aquatheatre with synchronized leaps and high-speed swimming—provided they're in the mood. "They're a bunch of teenagers," the director of training, Kevin Walsh, said recently, with a sigh. "*Tons* of attitude." (Open daily, from 10 to 4:45—summer evenings and holidays until 7—with centennial events scheduled throughout the year. For feeding times and other information, call 1-718 265-3474.)

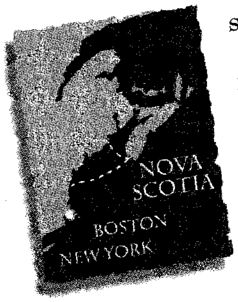
Strictly Ballroom—The American Swing Dance Championships spin into local dance halls, with beginner lessons, brushup workshops, general throwdowns into the wee hours—and serious nightly competitions for the thirty-thousand-dollar purse. Learn the basic steps before brunch, then watch the pros show off their practiced combinations in swirls of sequins. (April 11, from 7 to 12:30 A.M.; April 12-13, from 9 A.M. to 3:30 A.M.; and April 14, from 9 A.M. to 10 P.M. For registration and schedule information, call 1-800 647-9464.)

For Whom Nobel Tolls—April 12 at 7:30: Seamus Heaney and Derek Walcott read from their work. (Dia Center for the Arts, 548 W. 22nd St. 989-5566. Tickets at the door.) . . . ¶ April 16 at 7: Saul Bellow reads from his work. (Queens College, Kissena Blvd. and Melbourne Ave., Flushing. 1-718 997-4646. Tickets at the door.)

More Readings—April 15 at 8: Rachel Hadas, Anthony Hecht, Alison Lurie, and Richard Wilbur, among others, pay tribute to the late James Merrill at a memorial reading. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100.) . . . ¶ April 16 at 12:30: A. J. Verdelle reads from her first novel, "The Good Negress." (St. Paul's Chapel, Trinity Church, Broadway at Fulton St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ April 16 at 8: Five East Coast nominees for *Granta's* Best of the Young Novelists competition—Michael Drinkard ("Disobedience"), Jeffrey Eugenides ("The Virgin Suicides"), Randall Kenan ("A Visitation of Spirits"), Binnie Kirshenbaum ("Disturbance in One Place"), and Katharine Weber ("Objects in Mirror Are Closer Than They Appear")—read from their first novels. (Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799.)

Talks—April 10 at 6: A quarter of a century later, Daniel Ellsberg reflects on the impact of the Pentagon Papers. (New School, 66 W. 12th St. 229-5690.) . . . ¶ April 11 at 7: Lesbian psychic priestess Lexa Rosean bewitches the crowd with selections from her latest book, "The Supermarket Sorceress: 75 Simple Spells, Charms, and Enchantments That You Can Make from Supermarket Ingredients." (A Different Light Bookstore, 151 W. 19th St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ April 16 at 7:30: Political analyst Jeff Greenfield talks with Ralph Reed, Jr., of the Christian Coalition, about the coming election. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100.)





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THE MOVIES

FILMS OPENING THIS WEEK

Fear—The teen-age daughter (Reese Witherspoon) of a recently remarried architect (William Petersen) develops a crush on a smooth-talking thug (Mark Wahlberg), in a thriller directed by James Foley. Opening April 12.

James and the Giant Peach—Paul Terry is James in a part live-action, part stop-motion-animation adaptation of Roald Dahl's 1961 children's book, with voices by Joanna Lumley, Miriam Margoyles, Simon Callow, Susan Sarandon, and Richard Dreyfuss. Directed by Henry Selick. Opening April 12. (Village Theatre VII, Sutton, 86th Street East Twin, 23rd St. West Triplex, Guild, and Lincoln Square.)

Jane Eyre—Franco Zeffirelli does Charlotte Brontë, with the assistance of Charlotte Gainsbourg, Fiona Shaw, and William Hurt. The screenplay is by the director and Hugh Whitemore. Opening April 12. (Paris.)

Kids in the Hall: Brain Candy—A comedy by the Canadian performance troupe, about society's obsession with psychotropic drugs. Directed by Kelly Makin. Written by Bruce McCulloch, Kevin McDonald, Mark McKinney, Scott Thompson, and Norm Hiscock. Opening April 12. (First & 62nd Cinemas, Waverly, and Lincoln Square.)

Loaded—Seven friends spend a weekend at a country house making a horror film, in a drama written and directed by Anna Campion. Opening April 12. (Angelika Film Center.)

Nelly and Monsieur Arnaud—Michel Serrault plays a retired magistrate who develops a relationship with a young divorcée (Emmanuelle Béart), in a drama directed by Claude Sautet. In French. Opening April 12. (Quad Cinema and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Rude—Writer-director Clement Virgo's three-part drama about life in inner-city Toronto on Easter weekend. With Maurice Dean Wint, Clark Johnson, Rachel Crawford, Richard Chevolleau, and Sharon M. Lewis. Opening April 12. (Criterion Center.)

The Silences of the Palace—A film written and directed by Moufida Tlatli, about the illegitimate daughter of a servant to a Tunisian prince in the nineteen-fifties, during the country's fight for independence. In Arabic. Opening April 12. (Cinema Village.)

Wallace and Gromit: The Best of Aardman Animation—Short films from the British studio. (Reviewed below in Current Films.) Opening April 10.

CURRENT FILMS

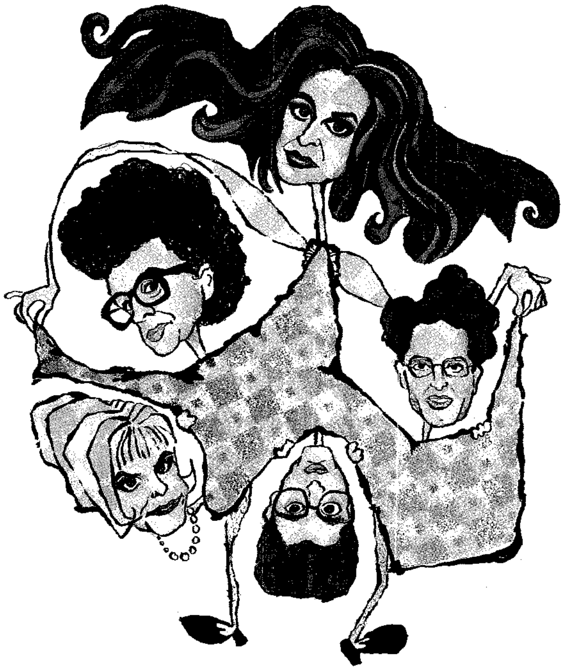
(The signed notes are by Bruce Diones, Sarah Kerr, Anthony Lane, and Terrence Rafferty. If a movie has been reviewed in The Current Cinema, the date of its review is given. Theatre information is listed on page 34.)

Anne Frank Remembered—Jon Blair's documentary includes interviews with Holocaust survivors and footage of Otto Frank, Anne's father, who died in 1980. Kenneth Branagh narrates. (Quad Cinema and Carnegie Hall Cinemas.)

Antonia's Line—A Dutch feminist fairy tale about an eccentric single mother (the impressive Willeke van Ammelrooy) who sets up housekeeping on a farm after the Second World War and takes all kinds of strays—from a retarded rape victim to a depressive, Schopenhauer-saturated intellectual—under her wing. The movie could be a crowd pleaser at art houses, but what it's packaging is little more than self-regard: Antonia and her clan are righteous, and anyone who gets in their way is a pig. Written and directed by Marleen Gorris. In Dutch.—S.K. (Angelika Film Center and Cinema 3.)

The Birdcage—Mike Nichols's remake of "La Cage aux Folles" (1978) largely contents itself with decking out what appears to be a profoundly, unalterably French farce in American drag; the cautious, sensible approach taken by Nichols and his screenwriter, Elaine May, has the drawback of making this movie feel a little, as the French might say, de trop. Although Robin Williams and Nathan Lane, as the bickering middle-aged lovers originally played by Ugo Tognazzi and Michel Serrault, are skillful, the script doesn't give them much opportunity to distinguish themselves from their memorable predecessors. Oddly, the funniest performer here is Gene Hackman, playing an aggressively straight, family-values-spouting politician. Also with Dianne Wiest.—T.R. (3/18/96) (Village Theatre VII, 34th St. East, Baronet, Coronet, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, Lincoln Square, Metro Cinema, and Criterion Center.)

Braveheart—Mel Gibson is the star, director, and co-producer of this hefty epic, which lasts nearly three hours and covers more than thirty years of medieval Scottish his-



Opening April 12, "Kids in the Hall: Brain Candy," with (clockwise, from top) Scott Thompson, Mark McKinney, David Foley, Bruce McCulloch, and Kevin McDonald.

ROBERT MELEE

tory. He plays William Wallace, the hero with the thrash-metal hair who decides to make life hell for the Englishmen who are crawling all over his country. The political argument that ensues is pretty dull, but the battle scenes are the loudest and most convincing in years: Gibson has learned from Kurosawa in lending a clarifying thrust to what is, essentially, chaos. With Patrick McGoohan, Catherine McCormack, and Sophie Marceau.—A.L. (6/5/95) (Gemini.)

Dead Man Walking—Tim Robbins's blunt, powerful movie tells the story of a murderer (Sean Penn) awaiting execution and a nun (Susan Sarandon) trying to save his soul—and, if possible, his skin. The filmmaker clearly hopes that familiarity with the grisly realities of capital punishment will finally breed contempt for the idea of premeditated, state-sponsored killing. And although the picture sometimes turns clunky and flat, as if it were sagging under the weight of its good intentions, it winds up being devastatingly effective. Penn has to reveal, within a reckless and apparently despicable character, a salvageable soul, and he makes the erratic rhythm of the condemned man's spiritual progress seem effortless and natural: he captures the languid, insinuating tempo of grace invading a locked-up spirit.—T.R. (1/8/96) (Village Theatre VII, First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Square, and Olympia.)

Diabolique—A glossy remake of Henri-Georges Clouzot's famous 1954 thriller, in which a man's wife and his mistress join forces to do him in. Here, Isabelle Adjani is the wide-eyed wife, Chazz Palminteri the piggy husband, and Sharon Stone the cool, worldly mistress. The movie is obviously designed to be Stone's show, but her glamorous presence is too vivid for the dull, familiar surroundings. At first, she's an ironic femme fatale; by the end, she seems pure camp, like a bad girl in a John Waters movie. The director, Jeremiah Chechik, and the screenwriter, Don Roos, try desperately to add American spice to Clouzot's chilled French concoction; they throw in nudity, extra violence, Thelma-and-Louise feminism, and dog jokes, and wind up with something awful—vichyssoise sprinkled with jalapeños. Also featuring Kathy Bates, whose good-humored performance mildly enlivens the movie's second half.—T.R. (4/1/96) (Village Theatre VII, Murray Hill Cinemas, 72nd Street East, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, Ziegfeld, Lincoln Square, and Olympia.)

Executive Decision—This tight, suspenseful film almost redeems producer Joel Silver for his last misfire, "Fair Game." This time he's chosen a good storyteller as the director—Stuart Baird, who edited his "Die Hard" and "Lethal Weapon" films. Although the plot, about terrorists aboard a passenger plane, is formulaic, the pace is swift and the shootouts carefully choreographed. Kurt Russell and a snazzy group of second-stringers (Oliver Platt, John Leguizamo) carry off a whispery surveillance routine that would make the crew at "Mission: Impossible" proud. Dispensing with showy Stallone toughness for Harrison Ford-like charm under extreme stress, Russell brings heroic panache to the genre.—B.D. (Village East Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, 34th Street Showplace, Gemini, Orpheum VII, 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

A Family Thing—This leisurely, unassuming drama about race relations was written by Billy Bob Thornton and Tom Epperson (who also collaborated on "One False Move") and directed by Richard Pearce ("The Long Walk Home"). An Arkansas tractor salesman (Robert Duvall) discovers that his real mother was a black woman, and sets off for Chicago to find his black half brother (James Earl Jones). The men don't hit it off right away, but they are destined, of course, to transcend their mutual suspicion; the movie, taking everything slow and easy, manages to make their eventual rapport credible. Duvall and Jones wear their roles like broken-

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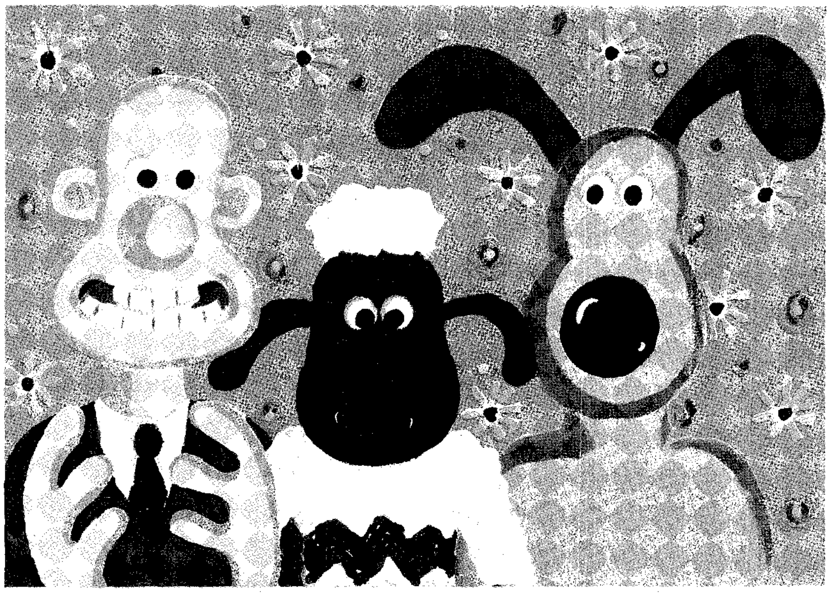
in work clothes, and the screenplay has a drawling Southern rhythm that's very pleasing. The picture avoids being vulgar, manipulative, or inflammatory but sacrifices a good deal of dramatic energy in the process: at some point, you realize that your enjoyment isn't so much pleasure at what's on the screen as gratitude for what's not. Also with Irma P. Hall and Michael Beach.—T.R. (4/1/96) (19th Street East 6, Murray Hill Cinemas, Beekman, Orpheum VII, Art Greenwich Twin, Regency, and Criterion Center.)



Opening April 10 at Film Forum, Nick Park's "A Close Shave," part of "Wallace and Gromit: The Best of Aardman Animation."

ELIZA GRAN

Fargo—Everybody in Joel and Ethan Coen's movie talks with painful slowness, as if the icy Minnesota air were freezing their chops; the resulting mood is lugubrious and oddly winning. The story, about a hopeless businessman (William H. Macy) who hires a couple of crooks (Peter Stormare and Steve Buscemi) to kidnap his wife, offers the usual Coen compound of random daftness and concentrated violence. Frances McDormand has a high old time as the police chief of the town of Brainerd; decent and unhurried (her character is seven months pregnant), she brings order to the weirdness and warms it up.—A.L. (3/25/96) (19th Street East 6, New York Twin, Art Greenwich Twin, and Lincoln Square.)

Flirting with Disaster—An adopted scientist (Ben Stiller) hunts down his biological parents in a comedy written and directed by David O. Russell. With Patricia Arquette. (Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema.) (Village East Cinemas, Cinema II, Cinema 3rd Avenue, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, Lincoln Square, and Embassy 1.)

The Flower of My Secret—Leo (Marisa Paredes), who is struggling through a wretched marriage, longs to be taken seriously as a novelist but has been churning out schlock romances for years, with horrible success, under a pseudonym. Her efforts to strip the dead wood from her life and discover what's left alive include flirting with a literary editor (the Chaucerian Juan Echanove) and making peace with her family. (Chus Lampreave and Rossy De Palma form a great pair as, respectively, Leo's mother and sister.) Pedro Almodóvar's script is, as usual, ripe to bursting, but his latest movie is gracious, affecting, and frenzy-free. In Spanish.—A.L. (3/25/96) (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Leaving Las Vegas—In Mike Figgis's startlingly beautiful new movie, Nicolas Cage gives a great performance as a failed writer who is consciously drinking himself to death. Figgis tells the story as a series of vivid, intense moments; the sole trace of conventional drama is the hero's affair with a kindhearted young hooker (superbly played by Elisabeth Shue). But the possibility that love will rescue him from his fate vanishes quickly, like a mirage. Although the movie is terribly, crushingly sad, its honesty is invigorating: it names its poison and downs it, neat.—T.R. (11/6/95) (Village East Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, and Lincoln Square.)

Mighty Aphrodite—Woody Allen stars in his latest picture as Lenny, a New York sportswriter bored by his wife (Helena Bonham Carter) and attracted to a hooker (Mira Sorvino) who happens to be the mother—though she doesn't know it—of his adopted son. The movie treads enjoyably over old ground, though rather than cruising along with the ease of Allen's best work it tends to hobble, and it closes in a flurry of undecided endings. Sorvino's comic momentum rescues it. She offers the alarming prospect of sexual comedy without neurosis; you don't see *that* too often in a Woody Allen film.—A.L. (10/30/95) (68th St. Playhouse, Quad Cinema, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Primal Fear—After a couple of duds ("Final Analysis," "Intersection"), the spark returns to Richard Gere's acting in Gregory Hoblit's conventional but enjoyable courtroom drama. Gere plays an attorney defending a young man accused of killing the Archbishop of Chicago, and although the story is full of tired characters (a prosecutor who's an old flame, a corrupt city developer), Hoblit's experience with actors in small roles (he has won Emmys for his work on "Hill Street Blues" and "NYPD Blue") grounds the picture. Frances McDormand, Laura Linney, John Mahoney, and Andre Braugher are all so casually skillful that Gere's c'mon-you-know-you-want-me style has the room it needs to play. But it's Edward Norton, making his feature-film début as the Boo Radley-like defendant, who steals the movie. It doesn't add up to much, unless you're surprised by the twists, but Hoblit has an economical style, and he gets the job done with very little fuss.—B.D. (Village Theatre VII, 34th Street Showplace, New York Twin, East 85th Street, Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, and Astor Plaza.)

Sense and Sensibility—The director, Ang Lee, and the screenwriter, Emma Thompson, turn Jane Austen's first published novel into a gracious and unfailingly pleasant entertainment. Thompson also plays the very sensible heroine, Elinor Dashwood, and carries the movie without overwhelming her fellow-actors. (Alan Rickman and Kate Winslet are especially good; the only clinker is a grotesquely mannered performance by Hugh Grant as Elinor's suitor.) If the picture pressed its temperate charms on us any harder, they would be much easier to resist.—T.R. (12/18/95) (First & 62nd Cinemas and Lincoln Square.)

Sgt. Bilko—Hollywood's reheating of TV classics is feeling more and more like desperation; an update of the old "Phil Silvers Show" has to rank among America's Least Wanted. This new Jonathan Lynn "comedy" looks as if it had been written during a lunch break. The only point of interest is Steve Martin, who has wisely decided not to rerun the Silvers interpretation; on the other hand, he is far too manic for a soldier and not venal enough for a Bilko. The disgraceful plot involves a secret hovering tank and a plan to close the base where Bilko works. Sounds like a good idea. Co-starring Glenne Headly and a decidedly portly Dan Aykroyd.—A.L. (4/8/96) (34th Street Showplace, First & 62nd Cinemas, Orpheum VII, Waverly, Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, and National Twin.)

Wallace and Gromit: The Best of Aardman Animation—The British animator Nick Park just keeps racking up Academy Awards; last month he won his third for "A Close Shave," the highlight of this seventy-seven-minute retrospective of work from the British Aardman Animation studio—probably the most fun in town. The Aardman artists employ plasticine models in stop-motion; there is something deadpan, even mournful, in their bendiness, and Park's inspiration is to play that homely tone against the frenzy of his plots. This time, Gromit, the smart dog, and Wallace, his well-meaning, slightly slow owner, set out to catch a sheep rustler. Entwined with this plot is a love story in which Wallace finds a soul mate. And the finale includes a wonderful mockery of the "Terminator" pictures. Park's 1989 Oscar winner, "Creature Comforts," is also on the bill. Brief, bright, unpretentious, and graced with the kind of immaculate gags that we associate with the slapstick of the nineteen-twenties, Park's movies have a style that you can recognize within half a second; can any of today's other filmmakers claim as much?—A.L. (Film Forum; starting April 10.)

ALSO PLAYING

ALL DOGS GO TO HEAVEN 2: Village East Cinemas, Manhattan Twin, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 23rd St. West Triplex, 84th Street Sixplex, and Embassy 3. . . . **ANGELS & INSECTS** (reviewed in our issue of 1/29/96): Lincoln Plaza Cinemas. . . . **BABE** (9/4/95): Manhattan Twin. . . . **THE BRIDGES OF MADISON COUNTY** (6/19/95): Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **BROKEN ARROW** (2/19/96): Park & 86th Street Cinemas and 23rd St. West Triplex. . . . **CARRIED AWAY:** Village East Cinemas, Eastside Playhouse, and Lincoln Square. . . . **CASINO** (12/4/95): National Twin. . . . **THE CELLULOID CLOSET:** Village Theatre VII and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas. . . . **CHUNGKING EXPRESS:** Angelika Film Center. . . . **CITY HALL** (2/19/96): 59th Street East Cinema. . . . **COLD FEVER:** Angelika Film Center. . . . **DENISE CALLS UP:** Quad Cinema and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas. . . . **DON'T BE A MENACE TO SOUTH CENTRAL WHILE DRINKING YOUR JUICE IN THE HOOD:** Embassy 2. . . . **FAITHFUL:** Village East Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Murray Hill Cinemas, Cinema I, Orpheum VII, and Lincoln Square. . . . **FRISK:** Quad Cinema . . . . **FROM DUSK TO DAWN** (2/5/96): Embassy 2. . . . **GET SHORTY** (10/23/95): Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **GIRL 6:** Manhattan Twin, Waverly, and Criterion Center. . . . **HAPPY GILMORE:** Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **HEAT** (12/25/95-1/1/96): Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **IT'S MY PARTY:** Angelika Film Center. . . . **JUMANJI** (12/25/95-1/1/96): Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **LAMERICA:** Film Forum. . . . **LAND AND FREEDOM** (3/25/96): Lincoln Plaza

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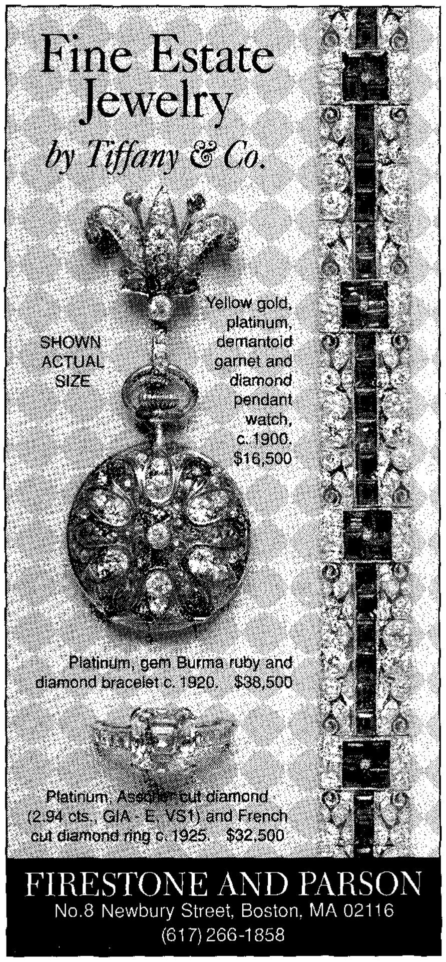
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diamond bracelet c. 1920. $38,500

Platinum, Asscher cut diamond
(2.94 cts., GIA - E, VS1) and French
cut diamond ring c. 1925. $32,500

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Cinemas. . . . **THE LAST SUPPER:** Village East Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, and Lincoln Square. . . . **MR. HOLLAND'S OPUS** (1/29/96): 86th Street East Twin. . . . **OLIVER & COMPANY:** Village East Cinemas, Sutton, 86th Street East Twin, 23rd St. West Triplex, Guild, and 84th Street Sixplex. . . . **THE POSTMAN:** Village East Cinemas, Sutton, 23rd St. West Triplex, and Carnegie Hall Cinemas. . . . **RESTORATION:** Manhattan Twin. . . . **RICHARD III** (1/22/96): Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **RUMBLE IN THE BRONX:** Criterion Center. . . . **A THIN LINE BETWEEN LOVE AND HATE:** Village Theatre VII, 19th Street East 6, Murray Hill Cinemas, Gotham Cinema, 86th Street East Twin, 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center. . . . **UP CLOSE & PERSONAL** (3/11/96): Sutton, 23rd St. West Triplex, 62nd & Broadway, and Embassy 4. . . . **WAITING TO EXHALE** (1/15/96): Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **THE YOUNG POISONER'S HANDBOOK:** Angelika Film Center.

THEATRE ADDRESSES

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(For show times, call 777-FILM, except where noted.)

EAST SIDE

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St.
Village Theatre VII, Third Ave. at 11th St.
Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th St.
Village East Cinemas, Second Ave. at 12th St.
19th Street East 6, Broadway at 19th St.
Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th St.
34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th St.
34th St. East, 241 E. 34th St.
Eastside Playhouse, Third Ave. at 55th St.
Sutton I and 2, Third Ave. at 57th St.
Gotham Cinema, Third Ave. at 58th St.
Manhattan Twin, Third Ave. at 59th St.
59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th St.
Baronet and Coronet, Third Ave. at 59th St.
Cinema I, Cinema II, and Cinema 3rd Avenue, Third Ave. at 60th St.
First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd St.
Gemini I and 2, Second Ave. at 64th St.
Beekman, Second Ave. at 66th St.
New York Twin, Second Ave. at 67th St.
68th St. Playhouse, Third Ave. at 68th St.
72nd Street East, Third Ave. at 71st St.
East 85th Street, First Ave. at 85th St.
Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th St.
Orpheum VII, Third Ave. at 86th St.
86th Street East Twin, Third Ave. at 86th St.

WEST SIDE

Film Forum, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110).
Waverly I and 2, Sixth Ave. at 3rd St.
Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th St.
Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th St.
Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd St.
23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd St.
Guild, 33 W. 50th St.
Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between Eighth and Ninth Aves.
Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th St.
Carnegie Hall Cinemas, Seventh Ave. between 56th and 57th Sts.
Angelika 57, 225 W. 57th St.
Paris, 4 W. 58th St.
Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th St.
62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd St.
Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, Broadway at 63rd St. (757-2280).
Regency, Broadway at 67th St.
Lincoln Square, Broadway at 68th St.
84th Street Sixplex, Broadway at 84th St.
Metro Cinema I and 2, Broadway at 99th St.
Olympia I and II, Broadway at 107th St.

TIMES SQUARE AREA

Astor Plaza, 44th St. at Broadway.
Criterion Center, Broadway at 44th St.
Embassy I, Broadway at 46th St.
Embassy 2, 3, and 4, Seventh Ave. at 47th St.
National Twin, Broadway at 44th St.

REVIVALS

(The following notes are by Pauline Kael and Michael Sragow. Theatre addresses and phone numbers appear with the listings following these notes.)

L'Avventura (1959)—Antonioni's study of the human condition at the higher social and economic levels—a study of adjusted, compromising modern man, afflicted by short memory, thin remorse, the capacity for easy betrayal. Visually, it's extraordinary: a calm hangs over everything—Antonioni's space is a vacuum in which people are aimlessly moving. This is upper-class neorealism—the poetry of moral and spiritual poverty. There had been nothing like it before, and it isn't fair to blame this movie for all the elegant sleepwalking and desolation that followed. There's something great here—a new mood, a new emotional rhythm—even with all the affectation. Léa Massari is the woman who quarrels with her architect lover (Gabriele Ferzetti) and then disappears from the uninhabited island they're visiting; Monica Vitti is her friend who takes up the search and then takes her place with the architect. In Italian.—P.K. (Symphony Space; April 16.)

Caesar and Cleopatra (1946)—Despite its resonant title, Shaw's play is a minor comedy—a slight, sly conceit—and it was blown up out of proportion in this extravagant, Shaw-adoring version directed by Gabriel Pascal, from Shaw's script. Vivien Leigh romps about as the cruel, deceiving kitten who is to become a passionate, tragic queen, while Claude Rains—as her lover and mentor, the amused, dispassionate Caesar—displays a world-weary wisdom that is more smugly shallow than Shaw could have intended.—P.K. (Museum of Modern Art; April 11 and April 15.)

Dr. No (1962)—It's here that Sean Connery, with blasé machismo, states for the first time that his name is "Bond . . . James Bond." Based on Ian Fleming's 1958 book, the script sends 007 to Jamaica, where he uses his "licence to kill" against the minions of a Eurasian renegade named Dr. No (Joseph Wiseman), who misguides missiles launched from Cape Canaveral. The "Bond girl" tradition starts here, too: in her bikini-and-hunting-knife ensemble, beachcomber Honey Ryder (Ursula Andress) fills the big screen. Terence Young directed.—M.S. (Walter Reade Theatre; April 10.)

Easy Rider (1969)—Two pothead bikers—Wyatt (Peter Fonda), who refers to himself as Captain America, and Billy (Dennis Hopper)—collect their money for a drug deal and set off on a cross-country quest for freedom, the freedom to "do your own thing." The two encounter a Southern lawyer (Jack Nicholson), a lush with the grin of a kid who hasn't grown up, and they introduce him to pot, but he doesn't get to enjoy it for long. The movie's sentimental paranoia obviously rang true to a young audience's vision. In the late sixties, it was cool to feel that you couldn't win, that everything was rigged and hopeless. The film was infused with an elegiac sense of American failure; and it had a psychedelic pull to it. The landscapes had dazzling textures; the terrific music by Jimi Hendrix, Roger McGuinn, and groups such as the Band and the Byrds gave the sluggish scenes a pulse; and Fonda, with his air of saintly noblesse oblige, died for American sins. Hopper directed, Fonda produced, and they wrote the script, with Terry Southern. Hopper became a culture hero; Nicholson, who's very funny in it, became a star.—P.K. (Symphony Space; April 16.)

From Russia with Love (1963)—The second in the James Bond series—exciting, handsomely staged, and campy—with Sean Connery pitted against a blond Robert Shaw and Lotte Lenya with a dagger in her shoe. Also with Pedro Armendariz, Daniele Bianchi, Vladek Sheybal, and the regulars—Bernard Lee, Lois Maxwell, and Desmond Llewelyn. Directed by Terence Young, from a script by Richard Maibaum and Joanna Harwood, based on Ian Fleming's novel. The score is by John Barry.—P.K. (Walter Reade Theatre; April 10.)

Orpheus (1949)—A masterpiece of magical film-making, this film, written and directed by Jean Cocteau, is as inventive and as enigmatic as a dream. Orpheus (Jean Marais), the successful poet who is envied and despised by younger poets, needs to renew himself; he tries to push beyond the limits of human experience, to reach the unknowable—the mystery beyond morality. Dark, troubled, passionate Maria Casarès is his Death: attended by her roaring motorcyclists, the hooded messengers of death, she is mystery incarnate. The jazzy modern milieu has urgency, and Cocteau uses emblems and images of the then recent Nazi period and merges them with more primitive images of fear—as, indeed, they are merged in the modern consciousness. This gives the violence and mystery of the Orpheus story a contemporaneity that, in other hands, might seem merely chic; Cocteau's special gift was to raise chic to art. In French.—P.K. (Museum of Modern Art; April 15.)

Potemkin (1925)—Great as it undoubtedly is, it's not really a likable film; it's amazing, though—it keeps its freshness and its excitement, even if you resist its cartoon message. Perhaps no other movie has ever had such graphic strength in its images, and the young director Sergei Eisenstein opened up a new technique of psychological stimulation by means of rhythmic editing—"montage"— which is used in this film for revolutionary political purposes: the subject is the 1905 mutiny of the sailors of the battleship Potemkin, and the massacre of the people who sympathized with them. "Potemkin" looks astonishingly like a newsreel, and the politically naïve have often taken it as a "documentary." The more knowing have a graceful euphemism: Eisenstein, they say, "sacrificed historical facts for dramatic effect." Silent, with added musical soundtrack.—P.K. (Museum of Modern Art; April 14.)

Rich and Famous (1981)—Twenty years in the lives of two women writers, pals from their college days. Bland Jacqueline Bisset is the "modern" artist—perpetually dissatisfied, self-conscious, hard-drinking. Candice Bergen is the gusher—as a housewife and mother, she writes a roman à clef about her Malibu Colony neighbors, and then she just keeps pouring out her fantasies and getting richer and richer. Bisset is unvaringly intense; if she doesn't know that the picture is a comedy, this may be because Gerald Ayres, who wrote the script, seems to mean everything she says. Bergen is much the livelier, but her caricature of a shallow bitch is too busy; she's a good sport rather than an actress. Directed by George Cukor, this movie has an unflagging pace, but it's full of scenes that don't play, and often you can't even tell what tone was hoped for. It's a tawdry self-parody.—P.K. (A Different Light Bookstore; April 14.)

The Umbrellas of Cherbourg (1964)—Jacques Demy's classic, with Catherine Deneuve and Nino Castelnuovo. In French. (Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema.) (Film Forum 2.)

LATE RUNS, CLASSICS, ETC.

(Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.)

Film Forum 2, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110)—"The Umbrellas of Cherbourg" (†).

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—April 11 at 2:30 and April 15 at 6: "Caesar and Cleopatra" (†). . . . April 11 at 3 and 6: "White Dresses" (1995) and "Street Girls" (1993), both directed by Ana Coyne Alonso, who will be present. . . . April 11 at 6:30 and April 14 at 2:30: "The Gate of Heavenly Peace" (1995, Richard Gordon and Carma Hinton). . . . April 12 at 2: "Das Boot" (1980, Wolfgang Petersen; in German), with Jürgen Prochnow. . . . April 12 at 6 and April 13 at 2: "Sabrina" (1954, Billy Wilder). . . . April 12 at 7 and April 14 at noon: "Mark di Suvero in Venice" (1995, Sandro Franchina). . . . April 12 at 8:15: "Chronicle of Anna Magdalena Bach" (1967, Jean-Marie Straub; in German). . . . April 13 at 2:30 and April 14 at 5: "Nino Franchina" (1994, Franchina) and "Eliseo Mattiacci" (1993, Franchina). . . . April 13 at 5: "Death of a Bureaucrat" (1966, Tomás Gutiérrez Alea; a Cuban film, in Spanish). . . . April 13 at 5 and April 14 at 2:30: "David Smith in Italy" (1995, Franchina) and "Anish Kapoor" (1996, Franchina). . . . April 14 at 1: "Potemkin" (†). . . . April 15 at 2:30: "Orpheus" (†). . . . April 16 at 2:30: "Commissar" (1967, Alexander Askldov; in Russian). . . . April 16 at 3: "Kry-Rytaiti" (1990, Xontapi Totore Payoroti; a Brazilian film, in indigenous languages, with Portuguese subtitles) and "Boco Livre No Sarare" (1992, Vincent Carelli; a Brazilian film, in indigenous languages and Portuguese, with Portuguese subtitles). . . . April 16 at 6: "Amarcord" (1974, Federico Fellini; in Italian), with Bruno Zanin. . . . April 16 at 6: "Yapallag" (1989, Alberto Muenala; an Equadorian film, in indigenous languages, with English subtitles) and "Paths of the Souls" (1989, Eduardo Lopez Zavala and Christina Bubba; a Bolivian film, in Spanish).

Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center, 165 W. 65th St., plaza level (875-5600)—April 10 at 2 and 6:15: "Dr. No" (†). . . . April 10 at 4 and 8:30: "From Russia with Love" (†). . . . ¶ Recent films from Africa. April 12 at 2 and 9:15 and April 13 at 3:30 and 10: "Albert Schweitzer, the 'Great White' of Lambarène" (B. Ba Kobhio; Cameroon). . . . April 12 at 4, April 13 at 7:45, and April 14 at 3:30 and 8: "I Am the Future" (Godwin Mawuru; Zimbabwe). . . . April 12 at 6:45, April 13 at 5:30, and April 14 at 6:45: "Keïta! The Voice of the Griot" (Dani Kouyaté; Burkina Faso). . . . April 16 at 2: "Hold Up the Sun, Part 1" (Laurence Dworkin; South Africa). . . . April 16 at 4:15, 6:30, and 8:30: "My Vote Is My Secret" (Julie Henderson, Thulani Mokoena, and Donne Rundle; South Africa). . . . ¶ Weekend showings for children. April 13-14 at 2: A program of African animated short films.

A Different Light Bookstore, 151 W. 19th St. (989-4850)—A Sunday-night series of free films (and popcorn). On April 14 at 7, the feature will be "Rich and Famous" (†).

American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (1-718 784-0077)—April 11-12 at 12:30: Three episodes from the "Lassie" television series: "The New Refrigerator" (1959), "Pitfall" (1965), and "Peace Patrol" (1959). . . . April 11-12 at 2: "The Lone Ranger" (1956, Stuart Heisler), with Clayton Moore and Jay Silverheels. . . . April 13-14 at 2 and 4: Two different programs of Tex Avery cartoons.

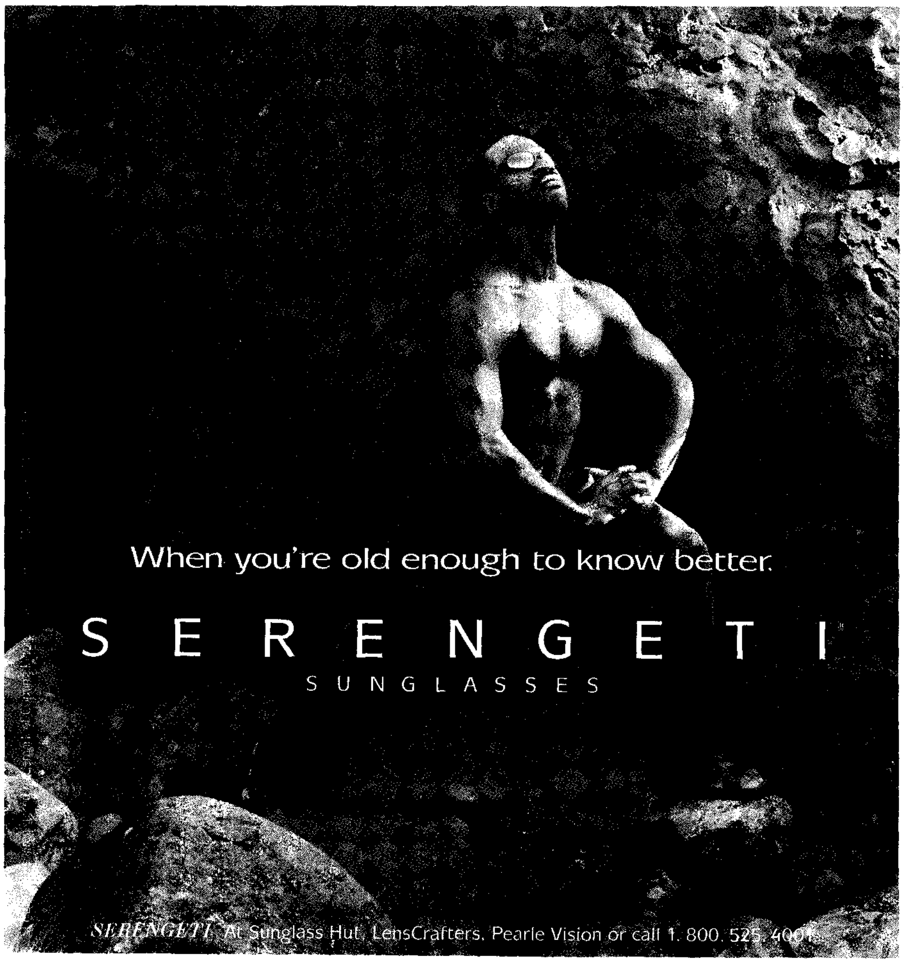
Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway. (1-718 638-5000)—A program of films from Latin America. April 12 at 7 and April 13 at 2: "The Devil Never Sleeps" (1994, Lourdes Portillo; United States and Mexico). . . . April 14 at 2: "The Southern Cross" (1992, Patricio Guzman; Chile and Spain).

New Victory Theatre, 209 W. 42nd St. (239-6200)—April 15-16 at 7: "Black Orpheus" (1959, Marcel Camus; a Brazilian film, in Portuguese), with Marpessa Dawn, and "Patakín" (1982, Manuel Octavio Gomez; a Cuban film, in Spanish).

Asia Society, Park Ave. at 70th St.—Seventeen films from Scandinavia will be shown over a four-day period (April 11-14). (For information, call 879-9588.)

Angelika 57, 225 W. 57th St.—From April 10, The 2nd Avignon/New York Film Festival 96, fourteen days of French and American independent films (including film tributes to Louis Malle and Henry Jaglom), seminars, and discussions. (For information, call 957-0951.)

Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. (864-5400)—April 16 at 7: "Easy Rider" (†). . . . April 16 at 9: "L'Avventura" (†).



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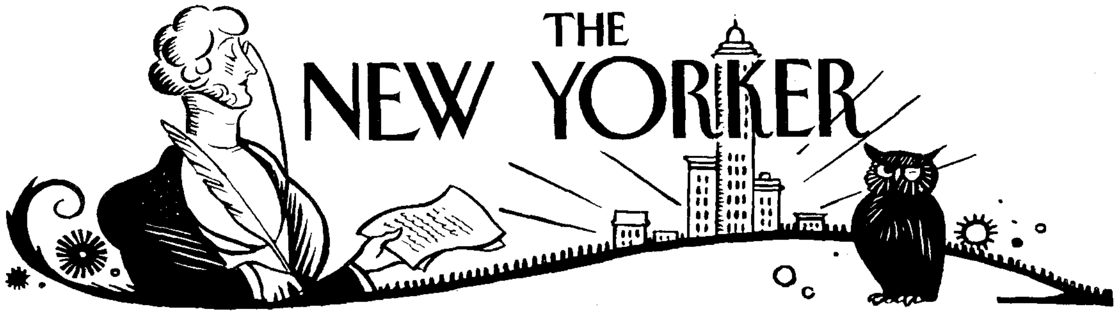


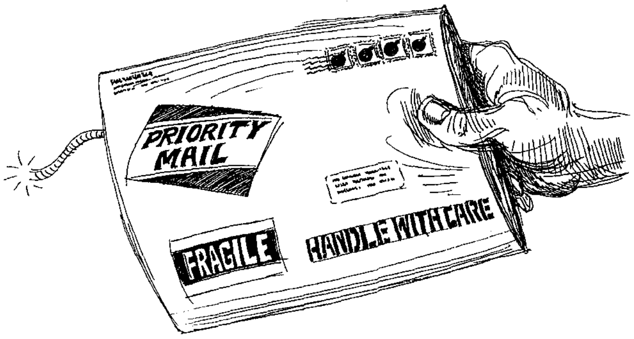
THE TALK OF THE TOWN

LOCAL MAIL BOMBER, STILL AT LARGE

POSTAL Inspector Gregory Rhatigan, who tracks bombs sent through the U.S. mail, learned Thursday morning that F.B.I. agents in Montana had discovered a pipe bomb, all wrapped and ready to go, in the cabin of the suspected Unabomber. As they were defusing it, Rhatigan put New York post offices on a reinforced alert for the city's own comparatively obscure purveyor of postal carnage: the "zip-gun bullet" man, as he is called by Rhatigan and other members of the special task force that has spent twelve fruitless years trying to stop him.

This elusive individual likes to send invitingly wrapped packages to random victims, who open them only to be shot by .22-calibre bullets aimed at the vital organs. He sent four of the packages between 1982 and 1995, killing one woman and injuring five other people in the New York area. Very little is known about him, but what small suppositions have been made bear a sobering resemblance to the Unabomber. His devices have a grisly elegance. They are tiny jewels of construction that have no known precedent in the annals of mail bombs; their incorporation of zip-gun elements recalls the Saturday-night specials of the sixties, which leads investigators to put the bomber's age at perhaps fifty-five. Like the Unabomber, the zip-gun bomber is clearly a loner who refrains from bragging to his neighbors or friends, leaving authorities in an information vacuum. F.B.I. databases have registered more than twenty thousand leads arising from the newspaper publication of the Unabomber's manifesto, but New York's zip-gun bomber has inspired none.

"We don't have a face, we don't have a signature. We've never had a communiqué—we haven't had one tip," Rhatigan laments. "We put out ads for a fifty-thousand-dollar reward and we didn't even get called by the crazies. The problem is New Yorkers are straightforward: if they have a score to settle, they'll throw a bomb through your window or put a gun right in your face."



The zip-gun bomber first struck in May of 1982. His first victim, a high-school guidance counsellor in Brooklyn, thought she had been sent a cookbook for Mother's Day. But the cookbook had been hollowed out to house batteries attached to light-bulb filaments that sparked the gunpowder in the bullets and propelled them out of three steel tubes. Two bullets penetrated her kitchen wall and the third her heart. Like the Unabomber, New York's mail terrorist took a rather long rest and did not strike again for eleven years. Then, each year for the last three years, ingeniously wrapped bullet bombs have injured a variety of people whom investigators simply cannot link: An elderly woman opened a little blue velvet box promising a medallion from the National Multiple Sclerosis Society and was shot through the liver; a Staten Island family of three was sprayed with bullets after the father opened another medallion box. And last year a pregnant nineteen-year-old in Queens opened a package advertising a managed-care health plan. Inside was a black book that resembled a church missal: the bullets within misfired and burned her legs and abdomen. She was not seriously injured, but the next day she gave birth two weeks early.

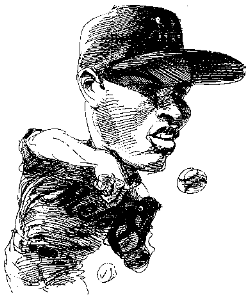
Rhatigan and the members of his zip-gun-case task force—including agents from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms as well as police detectives from the arson-and-explosives squad—spent years tracking the various bomb components. They chased down medallion boxes made in Canada, pored over the records of battery sales in every Radio Shack in the Northeast, and traced brake-lining tubes and electronic switches to stores in the metropolitan area. They encountered only dead ends. Rhatigan is mindful that the F.B.I.'s investigation was also going nowhere until a family member provided a direct link to the suspected Unabomber. He is both hopeful and worried that the publicity about the Unabomber will flush out his local counterpart. "Look at how the Oklahoma bombing set the Unabomber's juices flowing," Rhatigan says. "He had to do something to win back the limelight. Our guy has that same psychopathic profile. Of course, the goal is to get him before he gets us."

Posters picturing a mockup of a typi-

ILLUSTRATIONS BY VICTOR JUHASZ

OPENING REY

All the early indications out at Shea Stadium last Monday confirmed the feeble promise of another baseball Opening Day. A wintry drizzle dampened the white caps (a gate giveaway by the Mets) sported by the bundled-up fans; a troop of cops on bicycles performed a wobbly pre-game ballet in the outfield; Mayor Giuliani and Governor Pataki made a dorky duo-first-pitch appearance on the mound; and Glenn Close, who is the Robert Merrill of Queens, wore shades and a white polo coat for her anthem. Not much zing. Nobody said it, but everyone in the park also understood that this game would be a lower-case event when compared with the N.C.A.A. men's basketball final to be played at the Meadowlands in the evening; even before the first "Play ball!" of the year, baseball was coming in second in New York.



Rey Ordonez

The Mets, who are excited about their pitching this year, quickly fell into a hole when their starter, Bobby Jones, gave up two early homers to the visiting Cardinals. Boos came down, joining the rain, when he departed in the fourth, with the good guys behind by 6–0. The delightful turnabout now achieved by the Mets, who won the thing at last by 7–6, was noisily relished but still not the main event of the day, for our fanly attention had been seized by their slim, twenty-three-year-old rookie shortstop, Rey Ordonez, whose slithery nonchalance with each ground ball or infield peg that came his way added a warming aesthetic thrill to the day's doings. In the sixth, he executed a little dazzler on a hard chance behind second that made me smile like a baby, and when he turned a double play, moments later, making a frolicking little sprint toward first base before he flipped the ball across, the *News* columnist Mike Lupica, just in front of me in the press box, said, "Fred Astaire!" and gave us his signature raised-eyebrows, dropped-jaw look of appreciation.

This was Ordonez's very first major-league game, but what was happening out there didn't come as an absolute surprise. He is a Cuban defector, and ever since the Mets acquired him (in a 1993 lottery drawing among the major-league clubs) the word up from the minors, where he was playing, has been "Just wait!" I had glimpses of him in spring training this year, and noticed that fielded ground balls come out of his mitt and into his throwing hand so quickly that the flash of white makes you think for an instant that he has muffed the chance. General Manager Joe McIlvaine said, "He's going to lead the league in standing ovations," and a couple of scouts had whispered that he might just turn out to be the greatest shortstop of all.

Too much—and yet. In the seventh inning, the visitors' Ray Lankford pulled a double into the left-field corner, sending teammate Royce Clayton flying around third toward home. The relay to Ordonez, sixty feet up the line from third, came on a short hop, bringing him to his knees, but without rising, without rushing, he spun and threw out the runner cleanly at the plate, delivering the ball, in textbook fashion, on a single skip to the catcher. No one had seen this done before. The Cards didn't score again. The Mets' new shortstop has a few more games and seasons to get in before we can decide about Cooperstown, but it seems certain that what I felt on the way home from Opening Day was shared and will be dropped into conversations for years to come by many of the forty-two thousand and sixty fans who were at Shea on Monday: I saw Rey Ordonez play his first game in the big leagues. I was there.

—Roger Angell

cal zip-gun package have been hung in all New York postal-processing centers. Employees from mail sorters to carriers have been alerted to look for a telltale package: a Jiffy bag or padded envelope the size of a stenographer's notebook with a typed label, official stickers such as "Priority Mail," the return address of a charitable organization or a business, and stamps for the exact postage down to the penny rather than a postage-meter strip. Rhatigan explains, "There will be packages pulled, and we will X-ray them, and if we're lucky nobody will fall asleep on the job and deliver a package that we really don't want anyone to receive."

THE DEATH OF A FATHER

Just a few feet away from the foreign desk at the *Times* is a bulletin board where the editors have pinned up pictures of the children of all the correspondents posted abroad. Last week, as the newsroom learned that one of their own—the Frankfurt bureau chief, Nathaniel Nash—had been among those killed on the plane carrying Commerce Secretary Ron Brown, in Croatia, many of Nash's friends could not help drifting over to that bulletin board and staring at the photographs of his three small children. Nash, who was forty-four, left behind his wife, Elizabeth, an eight-year-old son, and five-year-old twin daughters.

One reporter on the *Times* staff, John Darnton, the London bureau chief, heard the announcement thousands of miles from the newsroom, but he, perhaps more than anyone, could empathize with the Nash family—especially with the children. The last *Times* reporter to be killed while working on a story was his father, Byron Darnton, who died in New Guinea fifty-four years ago while covering the war in the Pacific.

"I can't tell you how much I feel for Nathaniel's kids, maybe because I know something about this," Darnton said by phone from England. "I was eleven months old when my father died. He was on a landing craft off the coast of New Guinea, travelling with soldiers somewhere ahead of the American position. This was October, 1942. As far as we know, from a notebook that was found on my father's body, there were planes circling overhead but no one was sure whose they were. He wrote 'Jap or ours?' Finally, one plane circled back and dropped a bomb, and it exploded nearby. A piece of shrapnel hit the captain of the ship and he was killed. My father grabbed the wheel of the ship, but then a second bomb hit and a piece of shrapnel hit him in the neck. Growing up, we were always told that he died instantly, but that turned out not to be true. It also turned out that the plane that did the bombing wasn't Japanese. It was friendly fire.

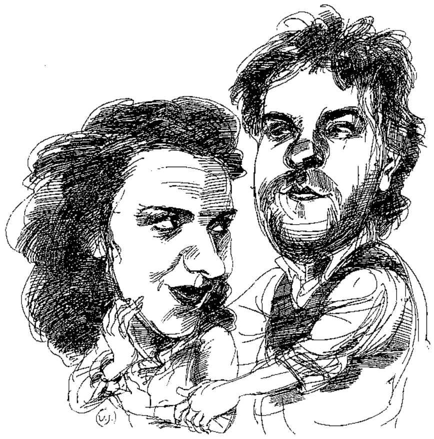
"As a result of this," Darnton went on, "I was raised with a huge respect for the profession. To some I may have elevated it to a larger status. I hope there will be something in that for Nathaniel's family. Basically, families try to latch on to explanations about why things happen, and, if the explanation can reach the level of myth, sometimes it's even better. We were told by our mother that our father died searching for truth. Nathaniel Nash was in Croatia doing his job. It's the same thing."

TO US, TO THEM, LA VIE BOHÈME!

IT'S everybody's favorite implausible moment in opera. On a cold Christmas Eve in Paris, a frail, alluring seamstress knocks on the garret door of a dreamy bohemian poet. Two soaring arias and two high C's later, they're in love.

On April 10th, when Puccini's "La Bohème" returns to the Metropolitan Opera, this blissful love duet should be easier than ever to fall for. The Rodolfo will be the boyish thirty-two-year-old Roberto Alagna—the Fourth Tenor, as he has lately been called. The Mimì will be the radiant Romanian soprano Angela Gheorghiu, just thirty. And they really are in love. While in New York, they will get married, which should be a relief to the international opera impresarios who have booked them jointly over the next several seasons—in "Faust," "L'Elisir d'Amore," "La Traviata," and "Roméo et Juliette"—and to the promoters of their upcoming album, "Duets & Arias." (Their recording of "Roméo et Juliette" will be released next year.)

"La Bohème" is their "magic opera," Gheorghiu said recently backstage at the Met, after performing a plaintively beautiful Liù in "Turandot." She and Alagna met while singing "La Bohème" at Covent Garden in 1992—a double début. "It was a good moment in my life," Alagna says. But it was just a moment, in a year that was mostly horrible. At the time, Alagna was married, and his wife, Florence, had developed a brain tumor. After two years of struggle, she died, leaving him with a young daughter.



Angela Gheorghiu and Roberto Alagna

The drama of Alagna's life has contributed to his mystique. Born in suburban Paris to Sicilian parents, Alagna never studied voice formally, and he wound up, rather like Puccini's bohemians, singing pop songs in smoky cabarets. A voice teacher heard him at a Paris pizzeria and passed him on to an agent. But Alagna refused instruction. "If you need a teacher all the time, you are not a singer," he says. He taught himself by listening to recordings and singing along with them—not just tenors but sopranos, too: Tebaldi, Callas, Scotto.

In 1988, he entered the competition sponsored by his idol, Luciano Pavarotti, and won. Alagna's gift—a virile, pliant tenor—was indisputable. "But I was worried," Pavarotti says. "He was pushing his voice over the limit. I told him, 'Look, I am going to send you to the final, but you are a lyric tenor and must sing the lyric roles.' "

So far, Alagna has taken the advice and thrived; he is a dashing stage actor. With her dark-eyed beauty, Gheorghiu is an equally compelling actress. Unlike her fiancé, she received a traditional conservatory education in Bucharest. But since her graduation, in 1990, she, too, has forsworn voice teachers and relied on herself, which makes both of them mavericks among young opera singers.

The couple keeps houses in London and Paris. Working together is ideal, Gheorghiu says. "We talk at home for hours about motivations, *personnages*."

"Angela has a nice idea about Mimì," Alagna adds. "She sees her as a go-getter." When Mimì, in an aside, tells Rodolfo that she lives all by herself, Gheorghiu explains, "she is not being modest—she is flirting!"

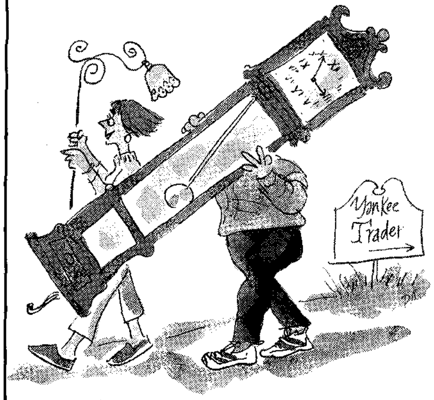
BEN AND BENNY

DAMNED if the Treasury Department hasn't revised the portrait of Benjamin Franklin on its new hundred-dollar bill in the spitting image of Jack Benny. The comedian's head is cocked at an almost imperceptibly coy angle. His lips are pure Benny—pursed. He looks as though he's just told a good joke and is turning deadpan to look at us for the laugh. On the old bill, which proved vulnerable to some very proficient counterfeiters, Ben looks sort of sappy and wears a lacy ascot under a fur collar. On the new bill, his collar is almost chic 1996, and the ascot barely shows. His face is bigger and off center, and even with the watermark, the color-shifting ink, the security thread, and the softer coloring, he seems to be far more bemused (by the microdetailed microprinting on his collar?) than the more noticeably baldish, not quite smiling portrait on the old hundred. Benny might have liked the figure "100" in the new, bigger size.

What's going on? Might there be plans in the cupboard to remodel Andrew Jackson on the twenty after John Wayne? Or Alexander Hamilton on the ten as Whoopi? Should Senator D'Amato investigate? ◆

"Local Mail Bomber, Still at Large," Lucinda Franks; "The Death of a Father," David Remnick; "To Us, to Them, La Vie Bohème!," Anthony Tommasini; "Ben and Benny," Lillian Ross.

Connecticut Yankee Weekend Getaways!



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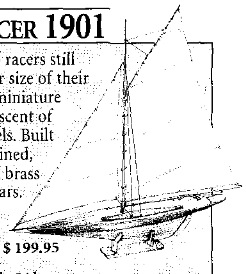

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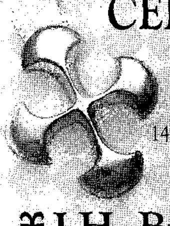


A CRITIC AT LARGE

THE SLAM DUNK

Christopher Darden retries the Simpson case, and loses it again.

BY JOHN GREGORY DUNNE

EVEN as the O. J. Simpson case moves full throttle into its profit-center phase, it remains one of those increasingly frequent events in American life so charged that one must declare an opinion of the outcome before daring to comment further. Therefore: I thought the jury in Los Angeles would and should, on the basis of the evidence I heard, return a guilty verdict. I also felt that there was no reason to impugn its integrity, as so many commentators rushed to do, for reaching a contrary verdict. The jurors, absent as they were during the endless deliberations over motions, did not hear the same case heard by others present in the courtroom or by those who periodically followed the proceedings on television, and they certainly did not hear any of the tangential scorekeeping by the putative legal experts—who was up, who was down, who had a good day, who a bad—which poisoned the airwaves during the trial. The verdict, it should be remembered, was unanimous: the nine African-Americans on the panel were joined by its two Caucasians and one Latino, these last three presumably not seeking the same retribution attributed to the black members; if the non-blacks had not agreed with the black majority, the jury would have hung, as most of the experts predicted it would.

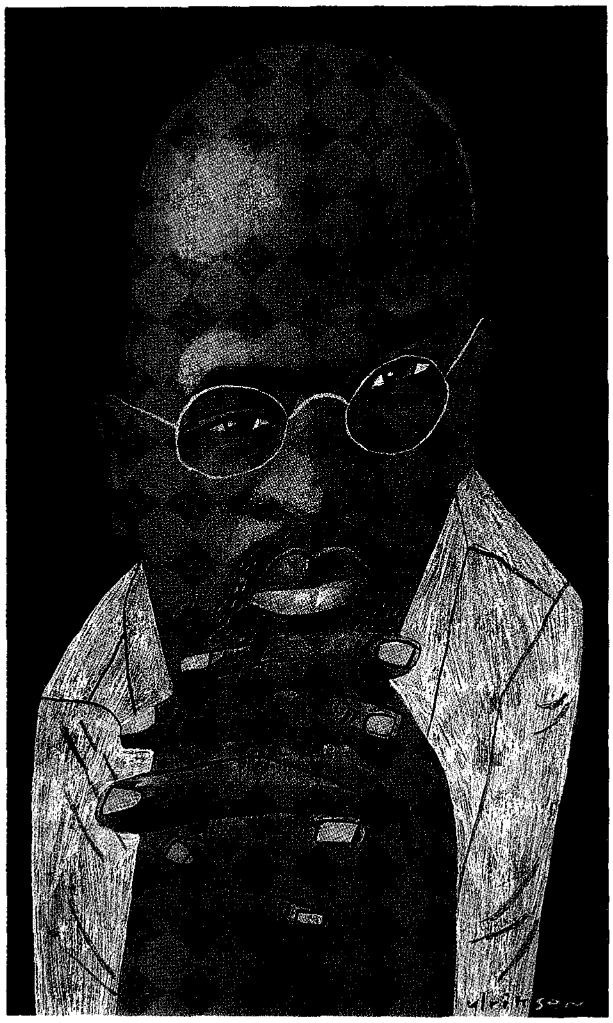
With this on the record, I can say that the initial heavyweight entry in the Simpson literary sweepstakes, "In Contempt," Christopher Darden's account of his life and of his role as the second prosecutor in the Simpson case, is a bad, posturing, and sometimes distasteful book. Every memory is self-serving, and the occasional admission of error offers the author an opportunity to congratulate himself for his honesty and courage in mentioning it.

The problem with ghostwritten books is the absence of a genuine auctorial voice. There is always a filter—the ghost (in this case Jess Walter)—between the reader and the nominal author. In televised book-chat appearances, Darden comes off as a man with a high quotient of intelligence and irony, both of which are missing from "In Contempt." Unfortunately, he has chosen a voice that is faux schoolyard butch. He refers to O. J. Simpson repeatedly as "Asshole" ("Asshole was shaking," for example, or "When Asshole began doing interviews . . ."), not realizing that when he so personalizes a man he thinks guilty of two heinous murders he is trivializing both the crime and its victims.

Nor is the book's style a help. It has been conceived as a dramatic narrative—at times, a virtual novelization. When Darden reconstructs the crime as he thinks it might have happened, he displays a sexual avidity matching that of Faye Resnick. "Candles!" Darden writes. "That really got you, didn't it? That was *your* ritual, something that let you know she was ready to be taken. . . . You believed she was yours on that first date, when you tore at her pants to get at her more easily." As for Marcia Clark, she is presented as a slightly used vamp, a boys'-club kind of gal who nips at the bottle of Glenlivet in her desk, regularly uses the word "fuck" in conversation, may or may not wear underwear, and may or may not have had an affair with Darden (who seems to regard his caginess on this last point, both in print and on the tube, as gentlemanly). Darden's appeal to the basest reader response works only to his disadvantage, giving the book the appearance of a fast-buck quickie, its prose relentlessly vulgar and adrift in social resentment.

What makes this failure particularly depressing is that "In Contempt" had the potential of being the best book in the literature of the Simpson case. Of all the players, Darden seemed the only one capable of approaching it with detachment, nuance, and reflection. He was the most complicated of the participants, born the fourth of eight children in the arid black outback of Richmond, California, on San Francisco Bay. His father held down three jobs—as a welder at the Mare Island Naval Shipyard, a laborer, and a part-time bail bondsman—to keep the family together, and his mother, when the older children could take care of the younger, went to work in a school cafeteria. Darden has a teen-age daughter by a woman he did not wish to marry; although he was willing to do the right thing, she chose not to marry him. His older brother Michael was a petty criminal and heroin addict who contracted AIDS from a contaminated needle and died shortly after the Simpson verdict.

After graduating from San Jose State, Darden went to the University of California's Hastings law school, and when he passed the bar he was hired by the Los Angeles County District Attorney's office, which with about a thousand lawyers is in effect the largest law firm in the country. In time, he prosecuted murders (nineteen without an acquittal, although he does not say how many of those nineteen were plea-bargained and how many actually went to trial), and then, in 1988, he was assigned to the Special Investigations Division, which prosecuted bad cops, often for excessive violence against suspects or the destruction of private property. It was at S.I.D. that Darden ran up against the L.A.P.D.'s "code of silence"—the disinclination of police officers to testify against their own, and, when forced to do so, their inclination to lie. That cops sometimes lie on the witness stand is a fact that prosecutors will admit only after they leave the public sector; the name both they and cops have for it is "testilying," and it generally involves either stonewalling or fudging evidence to make a good case better. Darden's stint in S.I.D. did not make everyone on the Simpson prosecutorial team happy; one of his colleagues even thought he was "anti-cop."


Darden: the most complicated participant in the trial.

MARK ULRIKSEN

Interestingly, the overseer of S.I.D. between 1978 and 1980 was Johnnie Cochran, O. J. Simpson's lead counsel, who during that period was the No. 3 man in the Los Angeles County District Attorney's office. (Cochran had set aside a lucrative private practice to accept this post, after a personal entreaty from the then incumbent D.A. to help enlist minority lawyers, and he is still noted downtown as the only assistant district attorney ever to drive to work in a Rolls-Royce.) What their S.I.D. history gave Cochran and Darden was a significant common experience with the way cops can massage the truth: in a case of the magnitude of California v. Simpson, each knew, or should have known, how dangerous a swamp police testimony can be to navigate.

On the evidence, Cochran remembered this experience more vividly than Darden did, which did not uncomplicate their already complex relationship. In a sense, the subtext of California v. Simpson was Cochran v. Darden. Because of what Darden calls the L.A.P.D.'s "bunker mentality," S.I.D. cases were difficult to prosecute, and convictions harder to come by; the only recourse left to those who felt they had been victims of police abuse was in the civil courts. When Cochran returned to private practice, he enhanced his already considerable reputation in the African-American community by representing indigent, usually black, clients in suits filed against the police. Darden is at best grudging about Cochran's rate of success. "Civil attorneys like Johnnie Cochran came along after we'd done all the work," he writes. "They took our research and filed lawsuits against the police. The cases would end with some backdoor, million-dollar settlement brokered by Cochran or some other lawyer, and the officers would still be working." Cochran took these cases on a contingency basis—meaning that he was liable for all legal expenses and, in some cases, the plaintiff's personal expenses as well—and if there was a settlement he received a percentage agreed upon prior to trial. Darden, who knows better, nonetheless complains about Cochran's "high fees" in these cases, as if he were gouging the poor.

IN his forthcoming book, "Lessons from the Trial," Gerald F. Uelmen, the former dean of the Santa Clara University School of Law and elder statesman of the Simpson defense team, writes about "the unique culture" that prevails in the Los Angeles County District Attorney's office, a culture that "seems to apply a universal, irrebuttable presumption that all defense lawyers, without exception, are amoral sleazoids who are beneath contempt." The effect of this presumption in the Simpson case has been to encourage the current public fatigue with the principle that a defendant is innocent until proved guilty beyond a reasonable doubt. For defense counsel to argue so vigorously as to get an acquittal or hang a jury, especially in a capital case, is regarded by prosecutors as a kind of devil worship. Unofficially, the feeling permeates the D.A.'s office that the defense, in the interest of what prosecutors call "justice," should calibrate the vigor of its argument to the larger societal need of putting a perpetrator behind bars. The defense

"I forgot to say I was breast-fed."

• •

lawyer who strenuously makes a case for the presumption of innocence accordingly becomes a target of opprobrium.

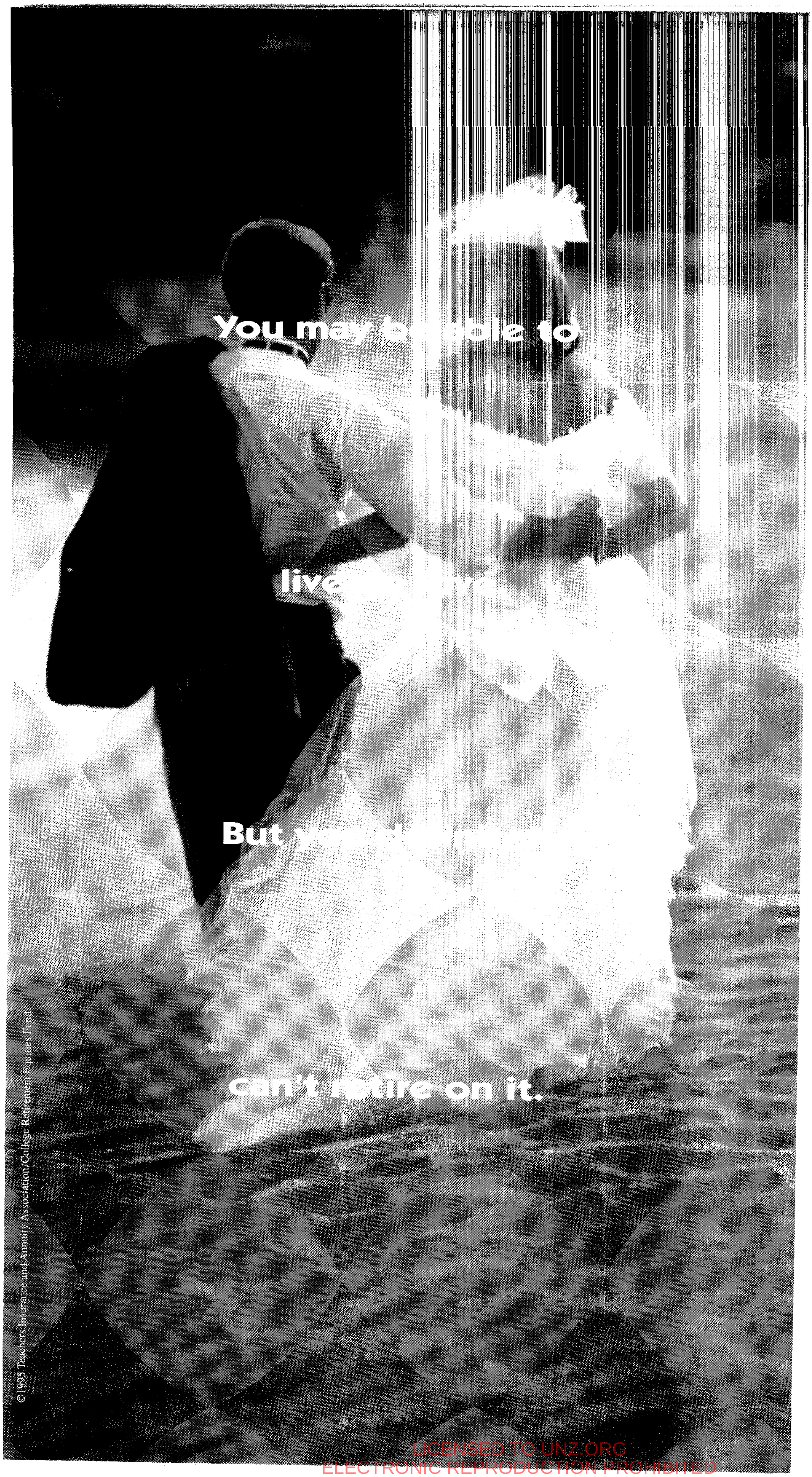
From the wreckage of California v. Simpson, Christopher Darden is the most eloquent of spokesmen for the palpable, ad-hominem antipathy toward the defense bar pervading the Criminal Courts Building in downtown Los Angeles. Cochran, according to Darden, wore "shimmery, Buck-and-the-Preacher suits," and had the "arrogant grin of a guy dealt two aces, who always carries two others in his sock." The defense team was "nine very expensive suits," and, again, "nine prominent, ruthless lawyers," a "moneyed . . . door-slamming machine designed to throttle any honest investigation." What these lawyers had in common was "their penchant for defending spoiled nasty rich people and their ability to attract and create publicity." Robert Shapiro was "constantly straddling the border where friendly ended and slick began." Robert Kardashian was "slick and arrogant," F. Lee Bailey looked "as if he were about to cough up a cocktail onion," and Peter Neufeld and Barry Scheck "had been busy springing convicted murderers and rapists based on DNA evidence."

The comment about Neufeld and Scheck is particularly interesting, since the prosecution argued in court that DNA evidence is irrefutable; on the basis of Darden's statement, it would appear that DNA is irrefutable only when used by prosecutors. As for defense attorneys in general, Darden says, they "operated with the integrity and tactics of used-car salesmen."

Implicit in this vituperation is the idea that the Los Angeles prosecutors were overworked and underpaid civil servants in cheap suits, their hands tied because they did not have resources to match those of the so-called Simpson "Dream Team." Throughout "In Contempt," Darden talks about the nine Simpson lawyers arrayed against him and Marcia Clark; in fact, he names at least a dozen other prosecutors who appeared before the court, including two from other California jurisdictions, and backstage there were, off and on, several dozen "babycake," or junior, D.A.s. If the D.A.'s office was financially strapped in this era of downsizing, it still had a budget of close to a hundred and fifty million dollars; its lawyers had access to databases and to such ancillary government agencies as the Police Department and the sheriff's office with their investigative staffs, as well as to the county medical examiner's team of scientific specialists.

It is the rare defense that can call upon similar independent agencies, because murder does not usually attract high-powered attorneys. The reason is simple: there is not that much money in it. Outside of mystery novels, the accused in murder trials are rarely as rich as O. J. Simpson was said to be; murder defendants usually live on the margins of society, are often minorities, and they are represented by public defenders, who are truly overworked and underpaid, and can offer little opposition to the steamroller of the State. In the last thirteen years, California's two Republican governors have appointed some fourteen hundred judges, most of them (like Lance Ito) former prosecutors, generally with a predisposition toward the People; two years ago, the Los Angeles *Times* reported that the local D.A.'s office had lost more than a hundred prosecutors to the bench during the eighties alone. It is cattle-call justice; plea bargaining is the Drano that keeps the system unclogged. The drill is to push a case through the courts as quickly as possible; Darden claims to have tried entire murder cases in less than five days. At both tables beyond the bar, there is an assumption that the accused is guilty, which is usually true. The money leverage belongs to the prosecutors, not to the public defenders; complaints about this discrepancy are rarely heard, because no one wants to hear them. Darden and Marcia Clark between them had prosecuted more than three dozen murder cases. What they had rarely done, however, was try a murder case in which the defense was as well financed as the People, when the playing field, in other words, was level.

On the face of it, the case against O. J. Simpson was what Los Angeles prosecutors like to call a "slam dunk." The defendant had a history of spousal abuse, he had opportunity, he had motive, and he had tried, in the televised slow-motion Bronco chase, to escape arrest. This was a slam dunk, however, that bounced off the rim. In the trial post mortems, many reasons were advanced for this failure, and the one that both prosecutors and the public—or at least the non-black part of it—found most satisfying was that the Dream Team had been guilty of some shifty footwork around the basket; the defense, it was commonly heard, had not proved Simpson's innocence—as if it had been required to do so. This is an idea that runs like a virus through "In Contempt";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reasonable doubt, Darden seems to be saying, is justice not served.

In point of fact, the Dream Team was not all that hot. Bailey was a has-been, Shapiro a fixer and plea bargainer, Kardashian an errand boy, Carl Douglas, an attorney in Cochran's office, a disaster; Scheck and Neufeld were good, but their Brooklyn accents appeared to irritate Judge Ito almost beyond reason. Cochran was a different story, a smooth article comfortable with his prominence in the black community, and equally easy with the knowledge that white Los Angeles saw him as its liaison to that same community. He was a schmoozer, a member of municipal commissions, a friend of the powerful. His exposure to S.I.D. and his subsequent representation of poor black plaintiffs in abuse suits against law-enforcement agencies left him with no illusions about the police and the possibility of their testifying. He also knew something else—he knew that he could press Christopher Darden's buttons, and this he did immediately after Darden joined the case by implying that he was asked to join the prosecution only so that it could show a black face to the jury. Darden was infuriated at the way Cochran seemed to be Uncle Tomming him, and it appeared to shade his conduct, to the point of recklessness and to the ultimate detriment of the People's case, throughout the trial.

Defense attorneys, even those with unlimited reserves, do not win cases, however, as much as prosecutors lose them. What a well-financed defense can do is exploit error, and from the get-go in the Simpson case there was a litany of prosecutorial error. The mistakes began with District Attorney Gil Garcetti's decision to move the trial from the Santa Monica courthouse to the massive Criminal Courts Building downtown. Off the record, the reason commonly heard was that a Santa Monica jury would not be racially mixed—political nitro after the Rodney King verdict in lily-white Simi Valley. One had the impression that Garcetti, who lives several blocks from Simpson's house in Brentwood, thought a Santa Monica jury panel would be composed exclusively of movie people and the occasional Pacific Palisades housewife driving a low-end Mercedes; there was no allowance made for the heavy black and Latino population in Venice and Mar Vista that would have rainbowed the venire.

Publicly, Garcetti's minions defended the switch downtown by maintaining that Santa Monica could not accommodate a high-profile proceeding; this made Garcetti's decision seem media-driven, with the major networks, CNN, and Court TV more relevant than Nicole Brown and Ronald Goldman. What the move to the Criminal Courts Building did was to change the ecology of the trial even before it began. As a motive for murder, spousal abuse would play better in upmarket Santa Monica than it would downtown, where the quotidian worries are crack, gangs, drive-by shootings, unemployment, and teen-age pregnancies, not a husband smacking a wife.

The two most significant errors, however, were made by Darden himself. The first was signing off on calling Mark Fuhrman as a witness, in spite of his misgivings about Fuhrman's truthfulness on the question of race, which could allow the defense to impeach his testimony on cross-examination. A crucial difference between the prosecution and the defense in this case was that when the defense got a hint that one of its witnesses might be impeachable (Rosa Lopez or Mary Anne Gerchas, say, or the Nobel laureate Kary Mullis, whose use of LSD could on cross-examination color his DNA expertise), that witness was never called. Privately, Cochran had urged Darden not to put Fuhrman on the stand, advice that Darden, considering the source, predictably chose not to take.

Darden's second error was making Simpson, in the jury's presence, try on the gloves; I suspect that he will go to his grave with Cochran whispering in his ear, "If the gloves don't fit, you must acquit." After the glove fiasco, Darden was cut out of the decision-making loop, and Marcia Clark would not speak to him for days. He insists, however, that there was blame enough to spread around, and he is not about to take the fall alone. "It was hardly the only error," he writes. "It wasn't even the worst. I hadn't chosen this jury or built a case that may have relied too heavily on Mark Fuhrman. I hadn't bored jurors with three-day classes on DNA or presented expert witnesses that fell like card houses before the defense lawyers."

Nothing in this extraordinary statement lends weight to the innocence of O. J. Simpson, but although it cannot have been Darden's intention, it does crack open the door to reasonable doubt, the legal concept that, however exotic it may be to the D.A.'s office, won Simpson his acquittal.

For the principals, the Simpson case has turned into a money tree. Nicole Brown's alleged friend Faye Resnick is now palming herself off as the Mary Magdalene of this affair, a spokesperson for battered women with two odious books ground out in her name, in one of which she thanks, among others, her "publicists" and her "yoga teacher and psychic healer." Faye Resnick did not lose a friend, she gained a meal ticket. It is via Ms. Resnick that the public knows Nicole Brown as a woman with breast implants, a talent for fellatio, an appreciation of a prominent phallus, and a taste for controlled substances. Darden received $1.3 million up front, and close to ten million dollars is being generated by the book contracts negotiated on behalf of Robert Shapiro, Marcia Clark, and Johnnie Cochran. What we can expect from this œuvre may be surmised from the answer Cochran gave on being asked about Christopher Darden: "The funniest thing I've heard is a Jay Leno joke that Darden would have been better off if he tried to nail O. J. Simpson instead of Marcia Clark."

To say that these "books" will appear and vanish without leaving trace evidence is by no means to suggest that the case will do the same. "Our system will rarely result in justice," Darden writes, "as long as the only measure of a great lawyer is *winning*." In my experience, the only lawyers who complain about the competitive aspect of the adversary system are those who have just lost a case, and so it should be noted that when the Menendez brothers were convicted in Van Nuys last month, Gil Garcetti toasted the victory with champagne. Although California v. Simpson turned out badly for the People, it had a tsunamic effect in courtrooms around the state. The second Menendez trial is a case in point; the judge (a former prosecutor who also presided over the circus atmosphere of the first trial) did not allow cameras in the courtroom this time around, severely limited the evidence the defense could present, tried the case with one jury instead of the two he had allowed in the first trial, and gave the jury instructions that made it virtually impossible to bring in a manslaughter verdict. Call it the beginning of Simpson payback. ♦

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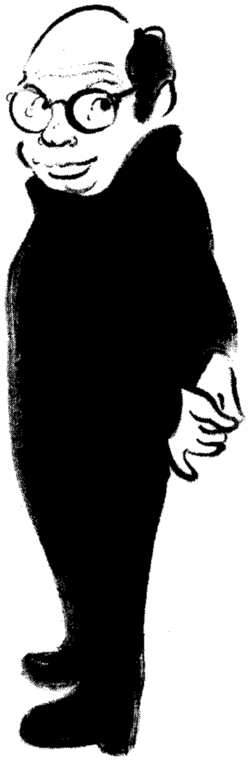
ONWARD AND UPWARD WITH THE ARTS

THE DANGLING MAN

How did Wallace Shawn manage to become both the befuddled hero of "Clueless" and one of America's most dangerous playwrights?

BY JOHN LAHR

THE playwright and actor Wallace Shawn was eating soup not long ago in a coffee shop on the Upper East Side, with his friend and early champion the novelist Renata Adler, when a group of young women surrounded the table. "They spied us through the window, obviously riveted by Wally. Then they came inside," Adler recalls. " 'Aren't you— Oh, my God! Weren't you in "The Princess Bride"?' 'And "Clueless"?' another one said. 'I loved "Clueless." Wait till I tell my sister!' " Shawn admits that he finds such attention "very, very strange—even weird and disturbing." When I interviewed him recently, he told me, "People sometimes literally define me, and even embrace me, for something, in a certain way, that I don't think of as being the main thing I do. They say, 'Hey! You're the guy who was in "The Princess Bride"!' And quite frequently I might be walking down the street thinking, Who the hell am I?"



Shawn's extraordinary new play is his version of "A Modest Proposal."

DEMETRIOS PSILLOS

Shawn made his film début in 1979 as a sight gag in Woody Allen's "Manhattan," where he was cast as the partly bald homunculus who is catnip to Diane Keaton, and since then he has appeared as a character actor in forty-one movies, co-written one cult film, "My Dinner with André," and starred as the eponymous hero in another, "Vanya on 42nd Street." But all this—and Shawn's charming, clownish public persona—has obscured his larger talent as one of American theatre's finest prose stylists and most subversive playwrights. Even the *International Who's Who 1995-96* lists Shawn's "stage appearances"—"Aunt Dan and Lemon," "Marie and Bruce," and "The Fever"—without noting that Shawn in fact *wrote* those excellent plays. Although Shawn's work has recently been the subject of a critical study, "Writing Wrongs," by W. D. King, and his plays have been staged at the most distinguished theatres in England and throughout Europe, he admits, "My plays are not actually performed in my own land." He adds, "It's very, very hard for your arrow to hit the target here. I'm not that discussed. That's why I'm going to England."

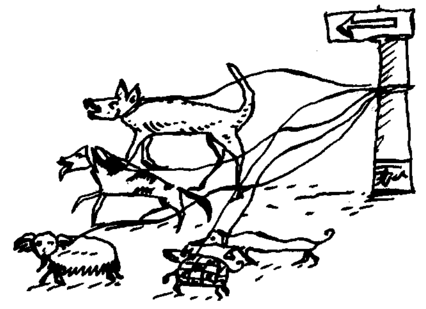
Shawn's newest play, "The Designated Mourner," débuts in London at the Royal National Theatre on April 24th. It is directed by David Hare and stars, among others, Mike Nichols, who has been lured back to the stage, where he first made his name, by what he calls the "strange combination of glamour and horror" with which Shawn writes about the present.

"The Designated Mourner" is a kind of ghost story. The narrator, Jack (played by Nichols), who once married into an élite literary coterie within which he was merely a hanger-on, survives an authoritarian clampdown after an uprising of the underprivileged. He finds that he is the only remaining witness to the otherwise extinct highbrow community. His famous writer father-in-law, Howard (David de Keyser), and his ex-wife, Judy (Miranda Richardson), are conjured up, along with the pleasures and the problems that follow when a "very special little world has died." In a series of exquisite crosscut monologues, there emerges a vivid picture of patrician sensibility and snobbery, and of the reprisals that Jack blithely refers to as "the disembowelling of the overbowelled." Jack asks the audience, "I mean, are you with me here? Am I going too fast?" and then describes the underclass: "We're talking about people who have no resources—none at all—no *money*, you could say. . . . They just don't like us. They *don't like* us." Jack and his listeners share that chilling moment in the evolution of mankind when "everyone on earth who could read John Donne was now dead," and Shawn charts Jack's downward trajectory from erstwhile highbrow to militant lowbrow. He has survived by the willed failure of his imagination: he consigns Donne to the trash heap and embraces his attackers' disdain for any kind of individual excellence. It's not just the past that's dead; it's Jack's soul. His search for comfort and for escape from the anger that envy inspires brings him and us, almost without realizing it, face to face with the death of culture.

In Shawn's work, the stage is stripped of most of its comforting dramaturgical devices—no plot, no set, no action—so the audience has nothing but the actor, the words, and its own moral compass to steer by. "My plays are really about the audience," he says. "The main character is you." His plays are a trap for consciousness and conscience. "I'm just too ambitious, really, to feel that it's enough to provide a little distraction for the few people who see my plays," says Shawn, who left college with "every intention of becoming a diplomat" who would "make some difference in the world." Shawn, himself the son of great privilege—his father was the late William Shawn, the renowned editor of this magazine from 1952 to 1987—is hard on his privileged audience. "I mean, the American upper class doesn't primarily need to be soothed and comforted," he explains, "although, like everybody else in the world, that's what they would like. That's not what *I* provide for them because I feel that they're too soothed and comforted already."

"There's nothing more fun than scaring the shit out of an audience," Mike Nichols says. "And I think 'The Designated Mourner' really scares the shit out of an audience." The event has already generated a lot of excitement, and has all the markings of a theatrical breakthrough. "I decidedly lose my underdog status with this production," Shawn says. "It's being done in a way that anyone in the world would envy."

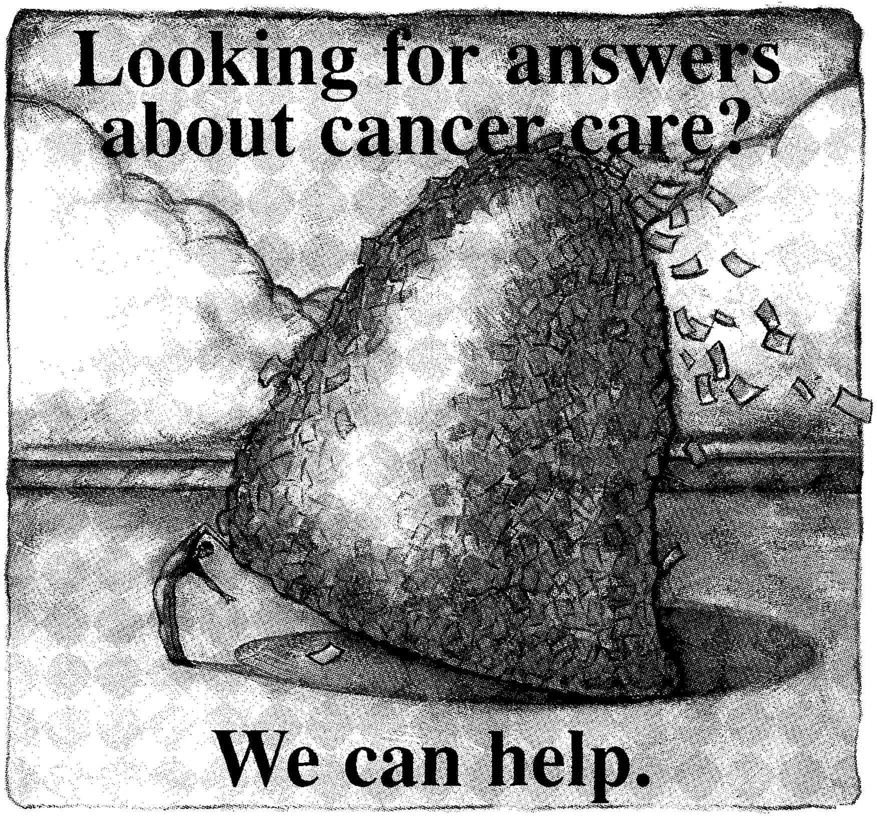
BEING both an underdog and an object of envy is a contradiction that Shawn embodies in his person. "A human being happens to be an unprotected little wriggling creature," he writes in his one-man show, "The Fever." "A little raw creature without a shell or a hide or even any fur, just thrown out onto the earth like an eye that's been pulled from its socket, like a shucked oyster that's trying to crawl along the ground. We need to build our own shells." Shawn's whimsical public shell is rock solid. Although he claims not to understand stage sets, his droopy, comic silhouette provides a distracting backdrop for his own contradictory nature. He is at once arrogant and modest, inept and cunning, dithering and bold, selfless and ambitious, well mannered and radical, materialistic and spiritual. In his dark turtlenecks, his woodsy jackets, and his sensible rubber-soled shoes, Shawn is a kind of rumpled, walking Lands' End catalogue. He is small, about five feet four. He is bald, with distinctive patches of side hair, which in the early seventies gave him the air of a mad professor. He has a lisp, which slightly deflates his seriousness, and when he's intellectually treading water he punctuates a conversation with declarations ("Well, uh," "Gee," "That's . . . just . . . incredible") that in his mouth, onscreen and off, become a fetching comic decoy for his acid thoughts, like the trout fly that hides the fishhook. Shawn's often parodied voice is halting and high-pitched, conveying a reflective tentativeness. "The difficulty with saying 'I love you,' " he once said to the director André Gregory, "is that it presupposes that you know who 'I' is and that you know who 'you' is." (Even his answering machine won't promise a quick reply: "Unfortunately, your message may be answered only after a long interval.") But Shawn's round, pug-nosed, sweet face, which screws itself into various noncommittal moods of bafflement, is the final, risible touch. Shawn presents himself as the opposite of predatory. He disguises himself as a fumbling, somewhat timid schlub: not someone streamlined for the brightness of day but, rather, an almost invisible night creature, like a slow loris, which survives in the jungle by playing dead.



Metabolism is style, so it's inevitable that Shawn's prose, like his persona, hides its seriousness behind a kind of semantic shuffling that disarms and attacks at the same time. "My style as a human being is to indulge people who need to escape," he has said. "Yet I insist on confronting them as a playwright. It's quite embarrassing, it's quite unpleasant, it's quite awkward." Shawn has learned that in order to make people swallow the barb of insight, he and his characters have to play the worm. In "The Fever" Shawn compares himself to a water bug ("It's waiting, squatting, deciding which way to move"), and in "My Dinner with André" the Wally character recalls his life as a dog. "I was just treated, uh, in the nicest sense of the word, like a dog," he says of feeling invisible when he was starting out in New York, in the late sixties, as a Latin teacher at the Day School. "I mean, I literally lived like a dog. I mean, you know, I would be at a party where there would be all these great personalities, and the idea that I could participate in things in any way except to sort of pad through on all fours and sort of lick people's trousers was just inconceivable."

In real life, however, Shawn has had access to almost everyone. He could get the script of "My Dinner with André" to Louis Malle within days of its completion and have Malle accept it immediately; he could invoke Henry Kissinger in "Aunt Dan and Lemon" and then lunch with him at the Four Seasons to discuss it; he could imagine Mike Nichols' inflections while writing "The Designated Mourner" and then call up Nichols when it was completed and get him to read the play—at Richard Avedon's apartment, where Shawn and Gregory had sometimes gone to write their movie. Shawn has been plugged into this network of attainment throughout his life: his Kirkland House group at Harvard included the sons of the presidents of the American Bar Association and the Federal Reserve Bank; his sidekick at Oxford was the film director Terrence Malick; and his longtime companion is the distinguished short-story writer Deborah Eisenberg. This is not to undervalue Shawn's talent or his accomplishments but to put his work in the context of the spiritual contradictions it addresses—the battle he sees in the world between privilege and neglect. Shawn's plays are critiques of American individualism as observed from its airless empyrean.

ALTHOUGH Shawn claims to feel sometimes like "an aristocrat in the seventeenth century," he lives more like a peasant. He has no television. He has no computer. He has no fax machine or microwave. One of his frequent retreats is at an undisclosed address above a laundry somewhere outside the chic boundaries of Manhattan. "I don't believe in habits or routines. I try not to have them," he says, and what he does for most of his day is also his secret. "You can say," Shawn told me, "that even the people who know him best honestly don't know what the fuck he does all day long." This seems to be true. André Gregory, who has directed three of Shawn's plays and considers him "one of my closest friends in the world," isn't quite sure where Shawn works. "I think he has an office down in the Village somewhere," Gregory says. (Some of the actors from his "Vanya" company once followed Shawn in the subway to try to see where he worked.) "The truth is I move around a lot," Shawn, who is almost always lugging a large satchel, says. "There's a kind of wandering-minstrel thing going on." Shawn won't discuss his writing routine ("I think it's bad luck"), and characterizes much of his day-to-day activity as sort of molelike, "doing little things." He also spends as much time as possible travel-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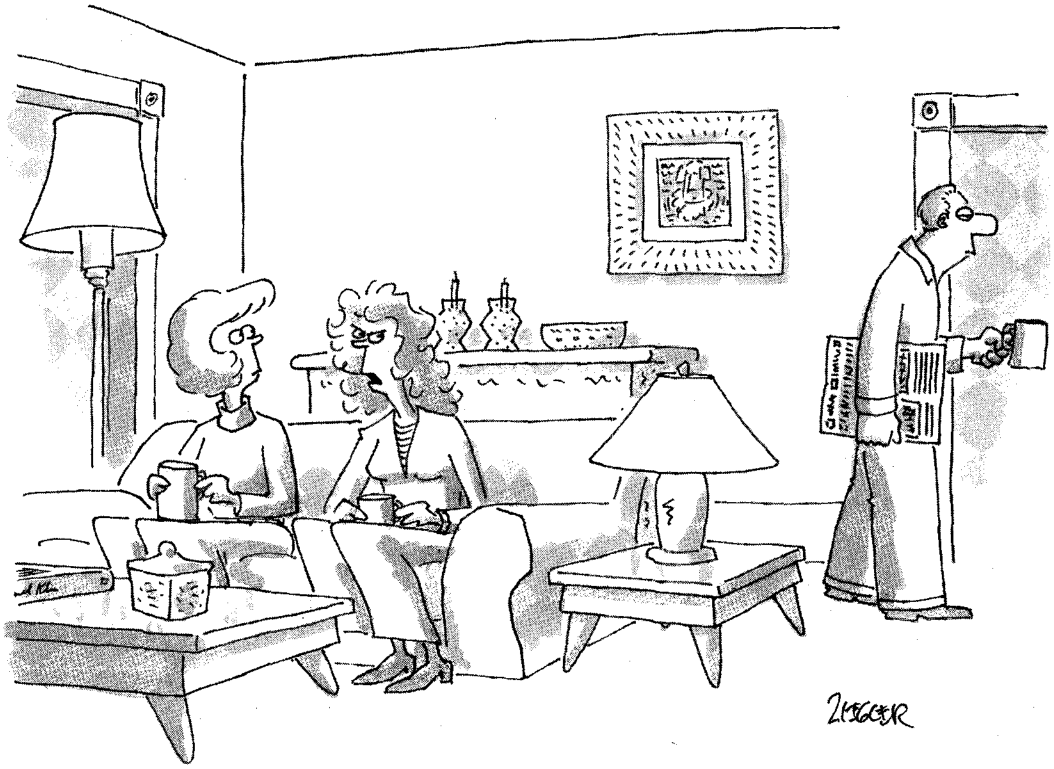
ling in poor countries, which he sees as a form of corrective behavior. "In the face of enormous suffering," he told me, "humorous detachment is too grotesque even for me." He spent his first year out of college in India, and has subsequently "hung out" in Mexico, Guatemala, Nicaragua, and El Salvador, and in Poland and Czechoslovakia, before and after their revolutions.

Shawn lives the way he does for a reason: nothing about him betrays the privilege of his education, the almost occult power of his family's literary connections, or the tenacity of his ambition, all of which might call down upon him hostile, envious attack. "A lot of his behavior is display that precludes attack," Renata Adler says. In fact, Shawn, who admits he's actually "a very arrogant and vain person," preëmpts envy by constantly spoiling any picture of his own distinction. "Wally had this persona when he arrived at Harvard, at seventeen," says Jacob Brackman, a college friend who wrote for *The New Yorker* before becoming a screenwriter; his film "The King of Marvin Gardens" used Shawn as the model for its hero, Jason Stabler (Jack Nicholson), whom Brackman describes as "this little underground man who sort of saw everything and had it all nailed down but was keeping you at arm's length all the time." Brackman adds, "In many ways, Wally *was* like a little Mr. Shawn, who was the biggest fumbler in the world. Wally's fumbling was completely from his dad. He was very polite and very stylized: he was telling you that he's just a miserable little worm." In Shawn's career as a character actor, no single performance has been more enduring than his presentation of himself, a cunning role-reversal of fortune. "He looks like a born victim—a not very well-dressed victim," the *Guardian* wrote in 1982, referring to Shawn's sartorial eccentricity of wrapping himself up in his black-and-white Magdalen College scarf in May.

Shawn was wearing that signature scarf when I first met him, in the early seventies. He appeared at my doorstep in Manhattan (sent at the suggestion of André Gregory), and was bearing six of his plays, entitled, unceremoniously, one through six. "I want you to read these," Shawn said. "But I don't want to know what you think." The gambit was typical of how Shawn wrong-foots life: a combination of frankness and imperiousness, dished up with po'-faced innocence. I recognized instantly that his modesty was the cover for an adamantine will; I sensed the familiar combination of power and panic which is the birthmark of a famous pedigree. We were both sons of cultural royalty: his father was a king of high culture, mine of low culture. We'd both lived on Manhattan's Upper East Side, attended Ivy League colleges, done postgraduate work at Oxford, gone into theatre. (The karma continued into adulthood when, in 1987, Wally played a jokey version of me in the film of my biography of Joe Orton, "Prick Up Your Ears.") The world we grew up in was a wonderful but worrying place, because there seemed to be no loss in it. We were equipped for pleasure but not for life. In "The Fever" Shawn describes our kind of cosseted childhood: "My friends and I were the delicate, precious, breakable children, and we always knew it. We knew it because of the way we were wrapped—because of the soft underwear laid out on our beds, soft socks to protect our feet." Part of this atmosphere was what Shawn calls "the unique element to what each of our fathers did," which increased the sense of separation from others and lent an undiscussable yet unswerving conviction that went well beyond the word "entitlement."

"I grew up expecting great things of myself," Shawn says, and the awed eyes of the world reflected his manifest destiny back to him. "From day one, the teachers at school expected great accomplishment and were interested." The fact that he was William Shawn's son was "a little bit of glamour in their day—it attracted them." He adds, "I didn't realize why they were grovelling at my feet, and it made me a very self-confident person until the age of forty, when I sort of figured it out—when I had a bit of a crisis of confidence." Shawn refers to the blessings of his life as "the voluptuous field that was given to me." He and his younger brother, the composer Allen Shawn, performed musical puppet shows and sketches, as many kids do for family friends, but in his family the shows were about Horace, the dynastic decline of China, "Paradise Lost,"



"Dead man walking."

and Wittgenstein, and the friends were people like Naomi Bliven, Philip Hamburger, Whitney Balliett, and Janet Flanner. (These and other assorted literati would turn up at the family's occasional buffet suppers.) He went to the Dalton School, where in fifth grade he wrote and performed in a play about the death of Socrates. He played Socrates. ("It was a philosophical play, not that different from the plays I have written subsequently," Shawn says.) At school, he vied with Chevy Chase for the title of class clown. Chase was then, as he is now, a noisy entrepreneur of slapstick, while Shawn, who was reading "Ulysses" at fifteen in order to discuss James Joyce with the writer Joseph Mitchell, radiated a kind of lèse-majesté. He expounded on the uselessness of literature and tried to coax his classmates into not doing their Latin homework. In his own adolescent eyes, he had already become a kind of dandy of detachment.

"*The New Yorker* was not really like Eustace Tilley looking at the butterfly through a monocle," Shawn says. "But in some ways the son of *The New Yorker* is like that." He continues, "I have a certain coolness, which maybe someone who didn't like me would call coldness. A certain detachment. I'm not always totally in the moment. There's usually a certain amount of observing going on on my part. It's a habit I formed early. A teacher in high school said to me, 'You know, Wally, people were not actually put on the earth just to amuse you.' " Shawn, who bears a physical resemblance to his father, also acquired his father's byzantine quality of containment, and, from the beginning, theatre offered release from his self-consciousness. "When I was twelve, I saw 'The Iceman Cometh,' " says Shawn, who by thirteen had read the Random House collection of nine O'Neill plays. "My parents would have died rather than see 'The Iceman Cometh,' but Bruce and Naomi Bliven took me to see it. It had an overwhelming influence on me." The next year, he saw "Long Day's Journey Into Night" twice. "I remember the intensity of watching and doing plays, the intense seriousness contrasted to the shallow life of being a twelve-year-old with somewhat silly preoccupations," he says. "My life was placid on the surface. Somehow, when I encountered Eugene O'Neill I immediately thought, Yes, this man is really telling the truth. I had that double identity that I still have today. Some people think of me as a clown, but my natural bent is to deal with heavier issues of life and death, torment and tragedy."

The dissimulation in Shawn's persona and his interest in thinking against his privilege are ways of shouldering the weight of his regal birthright. "Well, I mean, it is defensive, but what can we do?" he said to me. "I can't wipe the stain of all that off me. I was treated like a little prince. I mean, that goes very deep. I was raised with the absolute understanding that I was a very special little being. A little king." Shawn mythologized the contradiction neatly in the opening speech of "My Dinner with André," where the down-at-heels version of Wally "trudges" uptown to eat with André, the glamorous experimental stage director. "When I was ten years old, I was rich," Wally's voice-over says. "I was an aristocrat, riding around in taxis, surrounded by comfort, and all I thought about was art and music. Now I'm thirty-six, and all I think about is money."

The joke is typical of the game of three-card monte that Shawn plays with his background. It's true that life as a playwright proved a far greater struggle for Shawn than he had first imagined. "My expectation was always that I would be immediately received and immediately respected," he says. But Shawn was re-inventing the theatre to suit his own idiosyncratic attitudes and abilities. During his time at Oxford, he entered a playwriting competition. He didn't win, but he was hooked. In New York, a number of his Harvard classmates—Brackman, Hendrik Hertzberg, Tony Hiss, George Trow, and Jonathan Schell—were being brought onto *The New Yorker* as staff writers. Schell, in fact (in what must have been a complicated Oedipal drama for Wally, since Schell had been his roommate at both Putney and Harvard), was being groomed by Mr. Shawn as his successor. But while Wally's friends were becoming hot literary items in the big shopwindow of the magazine, he was supporting his playwriting habit with a series of improbable jobs: shipping clerk, Xerox-machine operator, garment-district porter. "I thought that was cruel," Philip Hamburger says of Mr. Shawn's nonemployment of his son. "It didn't strike me as displaying the sublime sensitivity that

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Shawn was supposed to possess.” Now the younger Shawn makes a show of sweet reasonableness about his exclusion from the halls of literary power. “If you want to be a writer, it’s dangerous to have a job,” he says. “My own father was an example. He wanted to be a writer. He ended up getting a job, and his life followed the direction of the job.” Back then, Wally was forced to follow his own quirky, unconventional path. He told me he’d “sold stock in himself”—his way of rationalizing a twenty-five-hundred-dollar loan he took from a consortium of friends in the sixties, in order to go off and write his plays. (To this day, the investors receive a small yearly check.)

He spent months watching rehearsals of the Manhattan Project in order to write a modern version of “Peer Gynt” (which he ended up abandoning), and then delivered a cauterizing satire about a seventies cocktail party, called “Our Late Night” (1972). This was his professional début—a wild, foulmouthed foreshadowing of the yuppie free-for-all of the eighties, in which the actors explore, in graphic terms, the sexual facts of their inner lives. It was produced at the Public Theatre in 1975, and even Joseph Papp, never fulsome about his employees, noted, “Wally is a very rare species. He is a dangerous writer.” Gregory, who directed the play, recalls, “The dance critic John Gruen came to a preview and said it was the most dangerous night in the theatre since the opening of Nijinsky’s ‘L’Après-Midi d’un Faune.’ Somebody tried to hit an actor. People would scream ‘Shut up!’ and ‘Stop it!’ It was very scary in the audience. I think what they were offended by was their own shadow—that Wally was seeing something under the surface of Americans.”

Shawn certainly didn’t foresee the row that erupted in the House of Lords when “A Thought in Three Parts” (1975)—three short plays that focussed on aspects of sexuality, including masturbation—was produced in London, by Max Stafford-Clark and the Joint Stock Company. Lord Nugent of Guilford, quoting from a *Daily Telegraph* review that called the play “as likely to give offence as anything I have ever seen in the theatre,” called on the Government to “protect the public against this sort of pollution”; the Attorney General considered prosecution for obscenity; the Charity Commissioners threatened an investigation of Joint Stock’s grant; tabloids were inundated with mail from the left and the right; and for a tense forty-eight hours Shawn actually feared deportation. In 1985, at the Royal Court in London, the début production of “Aunt Dan and Lemon,” which explores Shawn’s contention that “a perfectly decent person can turn into a monster perfectly easily” and, incidentally, foresaw the resurgence of anti-Semitism in the nineties, was booed and heckled by some members of the opening-night audience, who mistook the false logic of Lemon’s proto-Nazi conclusions for Shawn’s own.

SHEELA-NA-GIG

He has reached her island by stones
pegged in swollen water,
through rain that has fallen for days.

He touches the welling mouth, the split stone;
she shows him the opening folds
where rainwater troubles and turns.

The rain slows, and stops; light deepens
at the lid of the lake, the water creased
by the head of an otter, body of a bird.

—Robin Robertson

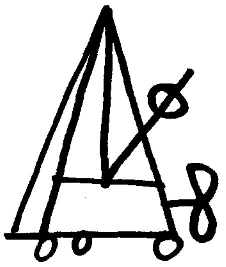
“My characters are much wilder than me,” Shawn told the *Times* in 1980. “I’m really a buttoned-up little creep.” He explained to me, “I don’t know a hell of a lot about real life, to put it mildly. That isn’t my strong suit, a knowledge of life. Obviously, my weak point in school was sports. I was brought up in that Jewish tradition where the man is a reader of books and does nothing physical. B. H. Barry will never have a job choreographing a fight in one of my plays. If I think, What do I actually understand, appreciate, and know how to deal with?, it would probably be sitting in a chair and talking. I do have some grasp of that.”

Shawn expressed this reflective side of himself—and courted a new kind of attack—in his last production, “The Fever,” which he has described as “some kind of human exhortation which is meant to arouse thought and action, not appreciation or enjoyment.” (It was his father’s favorite of his plays.) In 1990, he performed the show in the homes of friends, turning himself into a kind of Marxist Ancient Mariner, and putting his cultural guilt and his despairing sense of self literally under the audience’s nose. “There was a certain point in my life—in my early forties—where an awareness of my own position in the world created a kind of permanent unease and pain,” Shawn told me. In the monologue, the Wally character describes shivering and vomiting in a tropical hotel bathroom as he meditates on the contradictions of the killing fields outside his window and his own de-luxe life, and on the sin of separation, which insures the poor’s perpetual enslavement. “The Fever,” Shawn says, was a way, in the form of a play, of “trying to speak to people and to say something I genuinely believed about myself, them, and the world that we actually live in.” Shawn’s home delivery was a way of “taking it off the cultural menu of *entertainment*” and of keeping the play from being turned into an art object. (I saw an exhilarating performance of it in his London hotel room.) When Shawn finally did put the play on the stage, at various New York venues, in late 1990 and 1991, he dispensed with the paraphernalia of commercial theatre in his most minimalist setup to date: no program, no dressing room, no costume, no curtain call. In Europe, “The Fever” was respectfully received; in New York, it was mugged. “A musty radical chic stunt destined to be parodied,” Frank Rich wrote in the *Times*, and, without discussing the issues raised in Shawn’s spiritual quandary, he swatted it away with such ferocity that the play—and the chance of

Shawn's ideas' having wider debate—was stopped dead. In Germany he received more than twenty-five productions; in America there was just a handful. "I was absolutely sort of destroyed by his review," Shawn told me, in his bob-and-weave manner.

Now, five years later, Shawn's vision of the havoc of injustice has been reimagined in a more ambiguous, more oblique story. "And the poor, don't forget," he wrote in "The Fever." "They live on their rage. They eat rage. They want to rise up and finish us, wipe us off the earth as soon as they can." In "The Designated Mourner," a repressive state has arisen to prevent them from doing just that. The play brings together in one metaphor the fear of envious attack and the appeasing defensive maneuvers around which Shawn's whole social persona is organized: it is Shawn's "A Modest Proposal." Through Jack, he is demonstrating the systematic devaluation of the self in modern life as an adaptation to envy, which finally leads to the dumbing of society.

Jack is a projection of Shawn's fears—what he has no wish to be but what he sees our distracted society becoming. "As long as I preserve my loyalty to my childhood training, I will never know what it is to be truly comfortable," Shawn has written of growing up in the moral climate of a liberal household. "I feel a fantastic need to tear that training out of my heart once and for all so that I can finally begin to enjoy the life that is spread out before me like a feast." Shawn can't, which is his struggle and his peculiar genius. He lives with the contradiction of his continuous unease. "What is my role on the planet?" he says. "Is it just to consume and be a parasite and a happy hedonist?" At one point in "The Fever," he contemplates divesting himself of everything and resolving the dilemma of what he calls "being an overdog from the point of view of class analysis." He writes, "I could perfectly well put an end to the whole elaborate performance. If people are starving, give them food. If I have more than others, share what I have until I have no more than they do. Live simply. Give up everything. Become poor myself."



The flip side of Shawn's impulse toward abdication is Jack's self-abnegation. Instead of becoming poor, Jack impoverishes his own nature. Shawn wants to shrink the separation between himself and others—that distance which American individualism makes glorious. Jack just wants to shrink. Referring to John Donne at the finale, Jack says, "The rememberers were gone, and I was forgetting: forgetting his name, forgetting him, and forgetting all the ones who remembered him."

Shawn is alone among American playwrights in challenging the prestige of individualism. "A good deal of what Jack says about the self, I agree with," Shawn says, and adds that he finds the obsession with "the character called 'I' completely ludicrous." Certainly Jack has good sport with the notion of "I"—"this strange little thing that everyone has, this odd, tiny organ which the surgeons can't touch"—and with his own inner dialogue, his "idiotic arpeggios of self-approbation." Shawn steers the character not toward selflessness but toward emptiness, which brings a new, barbarous sense of power. In his so-called "Experiments in Privacy," Jack records episodes of shitting on books and pissing on poetry; he binges on television, tabloids, and pornography, and practices mindlessness. "Perhaps I could learn how to pass more easily from one moment to the next, the way the monkey, our ancestor, shifts so easily along from branch to branch as he follows the high road through the forest at night," Jack says, willing himself *down* the evolutionary ladder. "Let me learn how to repose in the quiet shade of a nice square of chocolate, a nice slice of cake."

In Shawn's unblinking prophecy, civilization dies not with a bang or a whimper but with a sneer and a sigh of pleasure. Shawn has survived his parents and his pedigree but not his guilt at upper-class comfort. "We need solace, we need consolation, we need nice food, we need nice things to wear, we need beautiful paintings, movies, plays, drives in the country, bottles of wine," he writes in "The Fever." "There's never *enough* solace, never *enough* consolation." His is a battle of conscience and contradiction in which there is no truce. "I know what I'm taking out of the world," Shawn told me. "What am I putting back? Am I putting something back in that is of value? I wouldn't be the one who knows." ◆

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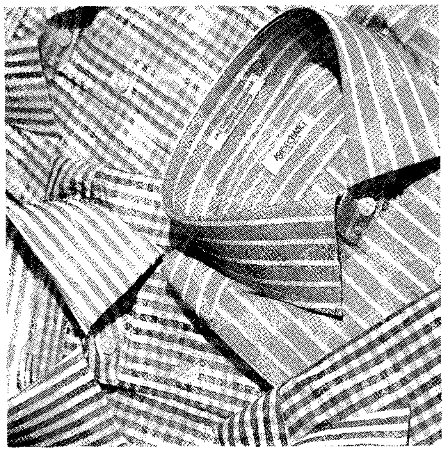

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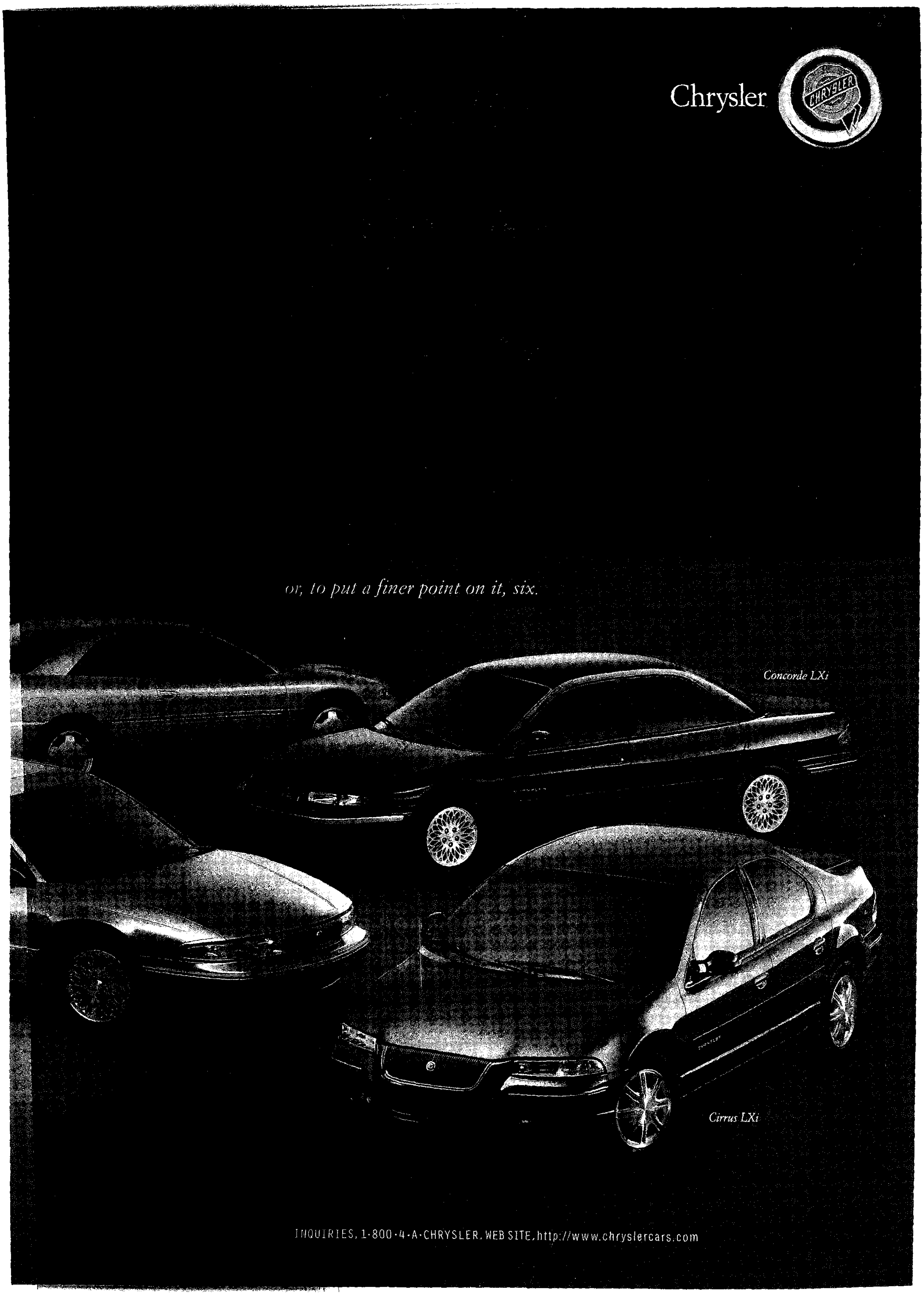

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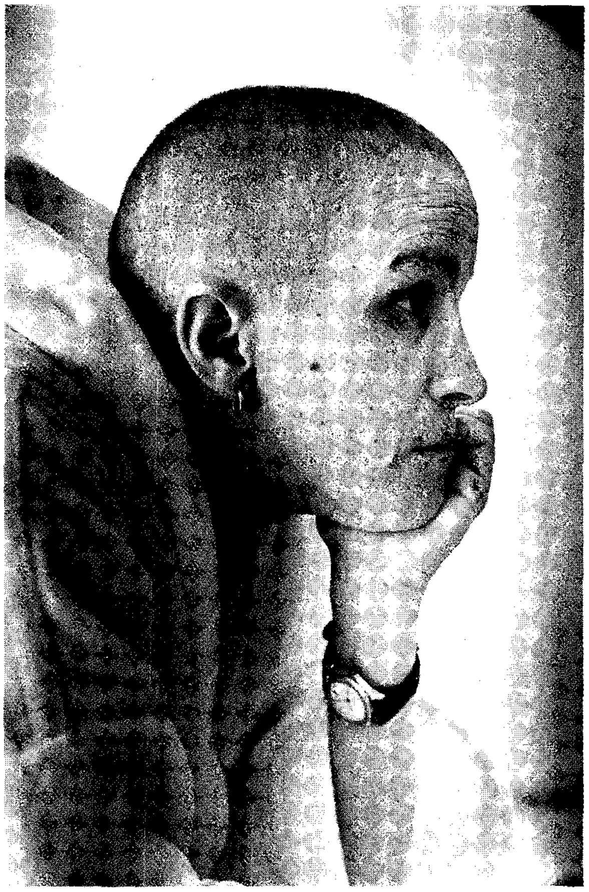
BY MARJORIE GROSS

So I'm sitting in the doctor's office, he walks in, just tells me straight out, "I was right—it's ovarian cancer, so I win. Pay up." And I say, "Oh, no, you're not gonna hold me to that, are you?" And he says, "Hey, a bet's a bet." You don't know what it's like to leave a doctor's office knowing you've lost a hundred dollars: suddenly everything's changed.

Well, O.K., I've exaggerated a little. What really happens is the doctor walks in and gives you the sympathetic head tilt that right away tells you, "Don't buy in bulk." The degree of tilt corresponds directly with the level of bad news. You know, a little tilt: "We've caught it in time"; sixty-degree angle: "Spread to the lymph nodes"; forty-five-degree angle: "Spread to your clothes." In her book about cancer, Betty Rollin wrote, "First, you cry." However, she didn't mention what you do second, which is "Spend, spend, spend." You're sort of freed up, in a weird way. Suddenly, everything has a lifetime guarantee.

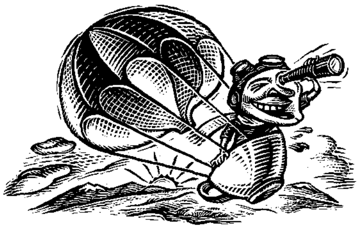


What can I say about chemotherapy that hasn't already been said in a million pop songs?

ALICE SPRINGS

So I had a hysterectomy, and they found a tumor that they said was the size of an orange. (See, for women they use the citrus-fruit comparison; for men it's sporting goods: "Oh, it's the size of a softball," or, in England, a cricket ball.) I languished in the hospital for ten days, on a floor where everybody had cancer, so the sympathy playing field was level. You can't say, "Hey, can you keep it down? I just had my operation." You might get, "So what? I'm on my fifth." "Poor thing" doesn't really come into play much on this floor. My mother, who also had this disease (yeah, I inherited the cancer gene; my older brother got the blue eyes, but I'm not bitter)—anyway, my mother told me that for some women a hospital stay is a welcome relief. You know, to have someone bringing you food, asking how you are, catering to your every vital sign. See, she wound up in a room with five other women, and they would sit around talking on one bed, and the minute the doctor walked in they would jump into their own beds and re-create the "incoming wounded" scene from "M*A*S*H," insuring that they would not be sent home early.

WHICH now leads us quixotically but inevitably to chemotherapy. What can I say about chemotherapy that



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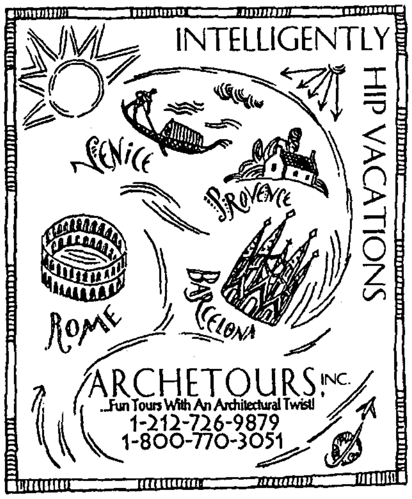

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hasn't already been said, in a million pop songs? I was prepared for the chemo side effects. I had my bald plans all in place. I decided to eschew wigs—all except the rainbow wig. Once in a while, I'd put that on when I didn't want to be stared at. Luckily, in my life style (Lesbeterian) you can be bald and still remain sexually attractive. In fact, the word "sexy" has been thrown my way more times this year than ever before. I've had dreams where my hair grows back and I'm profoundly disappointed. The bald thing works on other levels as well. The shortened shower time—in and out in three minutes easy. Shampoo-free travel. Plus, I get to annoy my father for the first time in twenty years. He hates to see me flaunting my baldness. I thought I'd lost the power to disgust him, but it was right there under my follicles all along.

The other side effect is that I've lost twenty pounds, which has sent my women friends into spasms of jealousy. I think I even heard "Lucky stiff." I said, "I think I'm closer to being a stiff than lucky!" But it fell on deaf ears. I suppose it's a testament to the over-all self-esteem of my fellow-women that, after hearing all about the operations, the chemo, and the nausea, the only thing that registers is "Wow, twenty pounds!" and "You look fabulous!" It's a really good weight-loss system for the terminally lazy. I mean, a StairMaster would have been preferable, but mine wound up as a pants tree.

Then, there are my other friends, who are bugging me to go alternative. So now I'm inundated with articles, books, and pamphlets on healers, nutritionists, and visualization (which I know doesn't work, because if it did, Uma Thurman would be running around my house naked asking me what I want for breakfast). I was also given a crystal by a friend who was going through a messy divorce. She was given the crystal by a guy who died of AIDS. As far as I was concerned, this crystal had a terrible résumé. As far as the healing power of crystals goes, let me just say that I grew up eating dinner under a crystal chandelier every night, and look what came of *that:* two cancers, a busted marriage, and an autistic little brother. There, the healing power of crystals. Enjoy.

This is not to say I'm completely devoid of spirituality. I mean, when you're faced with the dark spectre of death you formulate an afterlife theory in a hurry. I decided to go with reincarnation, mixed with some sort of Heaven-like holding area. Then, of course, we could also just turn to dust and that's it. I come from a family of dust believers. They believe in dust and money: the tangibles. The thing about death that bugs me the most is that I don't want to get there before all my friends. I don't even like to be the first one at the restaurant.

The hardest part of this whole thing is that it has completely ruined my loner life style. I've never felt the need to have anyone around constantly. I mean, I never wear anything that zips up in the back, and I hate cowboy boots. And now I get ten times as many phone calls—people wanting to come over and see me. When I'm well, I can go months without seeing someone. Why the rush to see me nauseated? I especially don't believe in the hospital visit. People come in, you're lying there, you can't do anything, and they start talking about their plans for the night.

I HOPE with all this negative talk I haven't painted too bleak a picture and therefore discouraged you from getting cancer. I mean, there are some really good things about it. Like:

(1) You automatically get called courageous. The rest of you people have to save somebody from drowning. We just have to wake up.

(2) You are never called rude again. You can cancel appointments left and right, leave boring dinners after ten minutes, and still not become a social pariah.

(3) Everyone returns your calls immediately—having cancer is like being Mike Ovitz. And you're definitely not put on hold for long.

(4) People don't ask you to help them move.

(5) If you're really shameless, you never have to wait in line for anything again. Take off the hat and get whisked to the front.

So it hasn't been all bad. I've done things I never would have done before. I even got to go to Europe with a creamy-white pop star. I used to use the word "someday," but now I figure someday is for people with better gene pools. ♦

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A REPORTER AT LARGE

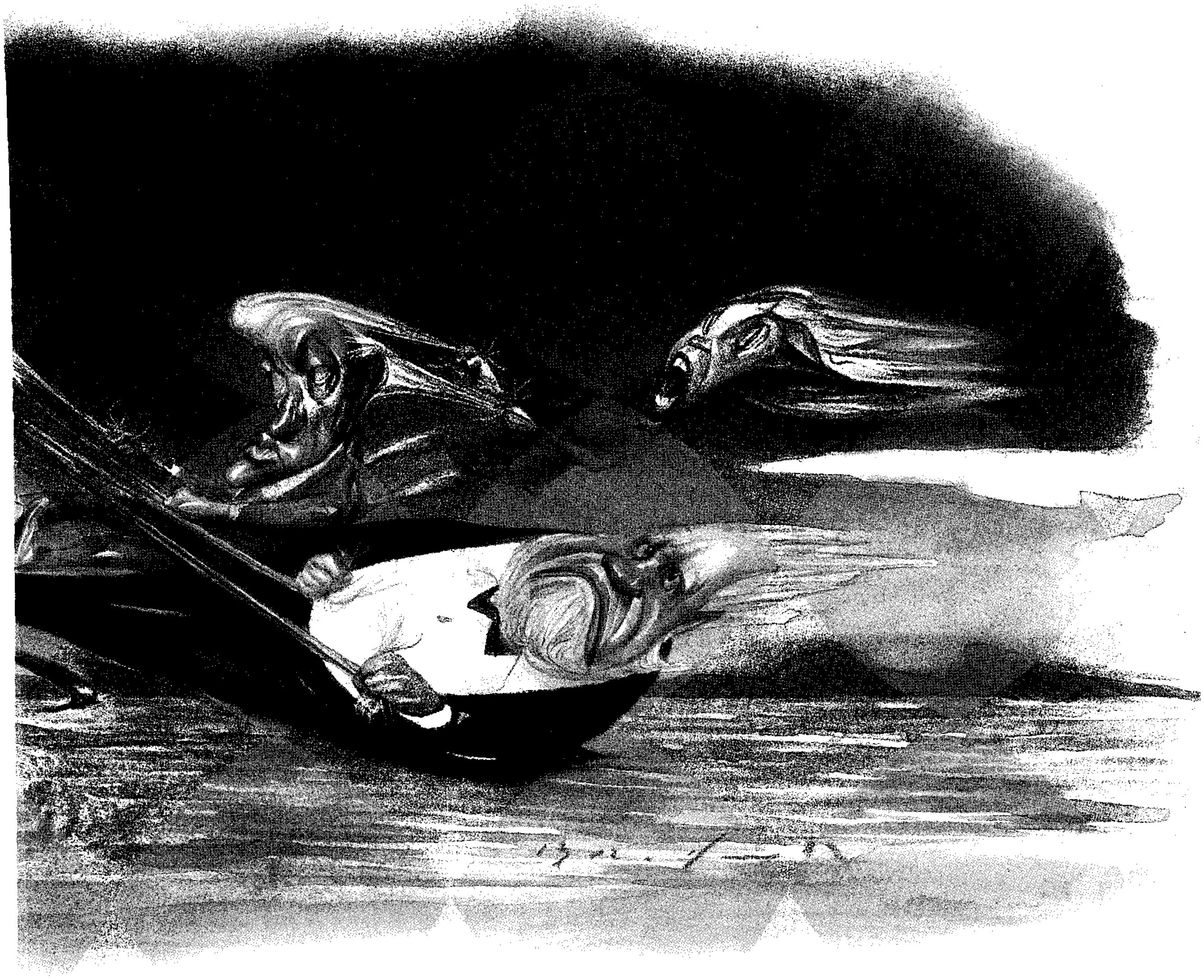
A FEVER IN THE WHITE HOUSE

How, exactly, did members of the Clinton team lose it at the White House, where their bungling in the travel office led to a scandal that won't go away—and that only Vincent Foster saw coming?

BY PETER J. BOYER

THE series of events that has come to be known as Travelgate began on an October day in 1991, when a young woman named Catherine Cornelius walked into the converted paint store in Little Rock that was serving as the early headquarters of Bill Clinton's fledgling Presidential campaign. Cornelius, a twenty-three-year-old marketing major, had just graduated from Texas A. & M. and wasn't yet ready to go home to Houston, so she decided to volunteer for Clinton. She had roots in Arkansas, but what was known to few at the time (and would subsequently loom large) was that those roots included a blood relationship to Bill Clinton: she is a distant cousin on his mother's side. The campaign was brand-new, but it was already attracting a group of young, eager volunteers like Cornelius—"muffins," in the parlance of "Primary Colors"—whose job was to perform whatever tasks, most of them menial ones, needed doing. Cornelius got lucky right away: the man running the campaign in those early days put her on staff, in charge of the volunteers.

That man was David Watkins, who was in charge of the campaign headquarters. Watkins, like Clinton, was from Hope, Arkansas. Handsome and friendly, he'd been the quarterback of the football team at Hope High School and the student-body



president, and then he had gone off to the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville. After serving as a lieutenant in the Army, he entered the advertising business in Little Rock, starting his own agency, and soon made a success of it. But, unlike other members of the remarkable Hope cluster—Clinton, Thomas F. (Mack) McLarty III, Vincent Foster, Jr.—he wasn't part of the élite crowd. Foster was the chief litigator in the Rose Law Firm; McLarty ran Arkla, the powerful utility company; and Clinton was the bright comer in the Arkansas Democratic machine. Most of that crowd lived in a select Little Rock neighborhood called the Heights, adjacent to the exclusive Little Rock Country Club, membership in which was, for many, a life's ambition. But Watkins, then a bachelor who had never quite shed his suntanned-jock persona, was of the town's entrepreneurial class: he belonged to the glimmering new Chenal Country Club, on the city's far west side, which was regarded by establishment Little Rock as a meeting house for the town's grasping nouveaux riches.

Watkins was never attentive to politics—was indifferent to it, really—until the Clinton era began in Arkansas. He later described Clinton as "the greatest seducer who ever lived," and he found himself so charmed that he gave Clinton his first-ever political donation—five hundred dollars—and then determined to work for him. After Clinton lost his first reëlection attempt for governor, in 1980, he decided to put his next campaign in the hands of a local advertising agency, and Watkins got the job. It was a fruitful match all through the nineteen-eighties, earning for Watkins Clinton's lasting gratitude when he helped rescue the Governor from a couple of electoral frights. On the Saturday night before the 1990 election, the campaign consultant Dick Morris gave Clinton some stomach-turning poll numbers: his opponent, Sheffield Nelson, had drawn within five percentage points. The Governor called Watkins, and, in an all-night session, they produced ads that countered Nelson's portrayal of Clinton as a tax-and-spend compulsive. Clinton beat Nelson by fifteen points.

A year later, Watkins became one of the first Arkansans in the Clinton-for-President campaign, joining before it officially began. By July of 1991, Senators Jay Rockefeller and Albert Gore had decided not to run, and a host of others were hesitating, leaving only Senator Bob Kerrey, of Nebraska, as a serious contender. Clinton was finding it increas-

Top: Vincent Foster, Hillary Clinton, David Watkins, Harry Thomason, and Catherine Cornelius. Strangely, Travelgate was rooted in their very efficiency.

ingly tempting to enter the race. Officially, he remained noncommittal, partly because he had promised Arkansans that he would serve his full four-year term, but that July the Clintons convened a secret planning session attended by the pollster Stanley Greenberg, the consultant Frank Greer, the Clinton aide Gloria Cabe, and Watkins; the meeting was held in Watkins's office, so as to avoid detection by statehouse reporters. The Clintons discussed the mechanics of establishing an exploratory committee, and by August they were ready to move. They asked Watkins to help gear up a campaign that could be ready when Clinton made the official announcement. Just before Labor Day, Watkins rented an office, had phones installed, hired operators, and coördinated volunteers. When the campaign began, Watkins was named deputy campaign manager and was put in charge of operations.

Though Clinton's candidacy may have seemed like a movable crisis with placards, the Clinton campaign was one of the best-run campaigns in history, disciplined and tightly efficient. At the low ebb of New Hampshire, when Clinton was reeling from Gennifer Flowers and equivocations about the draft, even some of the campaign aides who would one day become political stars were getting edgy; with money tight, some demanded payment for services rendered, but Watkins held them off, and the campaign stayed on track.

Every Presidential campaign leaks cash in gobs, and the biggest money hole is travel. "Travel is so expensive and so dangerous . . . it's the biggest risk to a campaign," one financial expert and veteran of a handful of Democratic Presidential campaigns says. "People just jump on jets, saying, 'Oh, I've gotta be in San Diego,' 'I've gotta go to Fargo,' 'Oh, my God, I've gotta go to New Hampshire.' And what you have is this phenomenon where everybody gets on a plane and goes to wherever the action is. And you find yourself paying these bills for people who never should have been on planes going to New Hampshire, or wherever. And, of course, once they get there they charge hotels and food, and it becomes a sinkhole of expense." This phenomenon posed an acute risk to the Clinton campaign, especially after it began to catch fire, because of the hordes of Clinton advisers, pals, and hangers-on who insisted that their presence on the campaign trail was essential. The travel corner of the campaign coined the term F.O.B., for Friend of Bill. "Oh, the F.O.B.s!" one senior campaign staffer recalls. "We got so tired of these people calling up and saying, 'I was a roommate of his at Georgetown'—he must have had four hundred thousand roommates at Georgetown—'and he really *wants* me to be with him at the Victory Night.' "

David Buxbaum, the Clinton campaign's budget director—"the budget Nazi," as Hillary Clinton called him—imposed strict limits on travel, devising a system that controlled costs up front by denying travel to nonessential campaign people. He and Watkins installed an on-site travel agency at campaign headquarters, and no plane ticket was issued until the agent got approval from a senior campaign staffer. Buxbaum was the no-man until things got too hectic, when he handed the crucial job to Catherine Cornelius, who proved quite able. "If somebody said, 'George Stephanopoulos wants me to go, I'm a very important person,' she'd sweetly say, 'Fine. I'll check George's office, and a ticket will be waiting for you, if everything's O.K.,' " the senior staffer recalls. "What was good about Catherine is she had nerves of steel if people fought her. She would dig in."

The campaign also received invaluable help from a Clinton admirer named Betta Carney, an adopted Arkansan who had made her World Wide Travel Service, Inc., one of the biggest in the country. Gambling on Clinton's chances, she put agents in the campaign headquarters before there was enough business to warrant the expense, and then, later, when the campaign expanded and was in need of cash, she helped develop a billing system that is likely to become the model for all campaigns. By far the biggest expense in campaign travel is the cost of chartering planes. Media exposure is a candidate's oxygen, which means that transportation must be found for every news-media person asking to follow the candidate's completely irrational travel schedule. Accommodating that need means chartering an airplane, which, when the entourage reaches the stage requiring jets, can cost as much as half a million dollars a week. Charter services require that money in advance, and the standard procedure had the campaign paying the cost and then trying to collect from the news organizations. A month's delay in payment could mean two million dollars out of the campaign treasury. But Buxbaum and Carney streamlined the payment system, by having Carney act as billing agent and requiring advance credit-card payment from reporters and TV-crew members before they stepped on the plane. The turnaround time practically vanished, and the press money flowed back to the campaign just a few days after each trip. This freed millions of dollars to be spent on TV ads in crucial primary states. As a Clinton supporter, Carney also gave the campaign corporate-account status, which meant, among other things, some slack time on payments for commercial-ticket purchases. (Travel agencies have been known to simply stop issuing tickets—effectively shutting down a campaign—if payment is late.)

Strangely, this very efficiency held the seeds of subsequent disaster. A key lesson of the campaign was that even so mundane a matter as arranging travel could yield enormous benefit to the larger cause. It was a lesson perhaps overlearned by some, who would later focus on travel efficiency as a way of helping President Clinton—and themselves, as well. This unlikely motif—travel management as a political asset—played itself out through the ambitions, misjudgments, and even the good intentions of several people in the Clinton sphere (some on its outer edge), and produced the political bungle that became Travelgate. Its unfolding was the stuff of farce, involving ham-handed covert sleuthing, rumormongering gone amok, and dumb decisions by a quaking White House staff fearful of disappointing Hillary Clinton. As a result, seven government workers of long standing lost their jobs and reputations, and that was only the beginning. The fiasco acquired a tragic aspect after landing in the lap of the deputy White House counsel, Vincent Foster, deepening the despair that finally led to his suicide.

But Travelgate didn't die with Vince Foster, or even with the advent of a more compelling Clinton controversy, Whitewater. Travelgate reasserted itself dramatically earlier this year, with the discovery of a lost memorandum written by one of the principal protagonists in the affair, the former top White House aide David Watkins. In the "soul cleansing" memo, as he described it, Watkins laid the blame for Travelgate directly at the feet of his "client," the First Lady. Any discrepancies between that account of her involvement and earlier accounts now fall within the purview of the Whitewater independent counsel, Kenneth W. Starr.

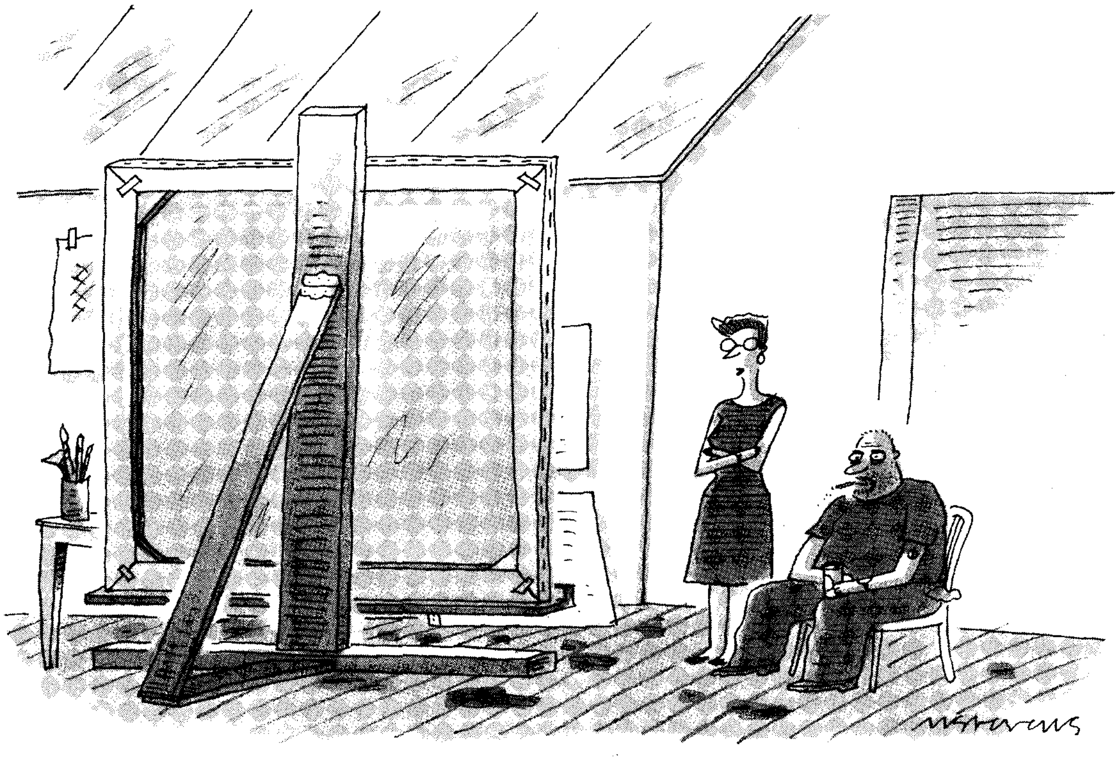
ANOTHER member of the Clinton-campaign entourage, the television producer and director Harry Thomason, also had travel-related expertise. Thomason, an F.O.B. of the first order, was a lifelong flying buff who rented his own plane to the campaign. When the enterprise outgrew his small craft, Thomason suggested that the campaign use an aviation consulting company, TRM, Inc., in which he had a one-third interest, and this proved to be an arrangement of incalculable benefit to the campaign. Every campaign veteran has a horror story about chartering planes. (There is, for example, the one about Michael Dukakis's plane being grounded during a big Labor Day swing because a surprise Federal Aviation Administration inspection found, among other infractions, an inoperative exit light.) Staff members were concerned about such things as whether a charter service out of Texas might want to sabotage the Clinton campaign on the instructions of Ross Perot's son, who controls much of the aviation industry there. But one of Thomason's partners at TRM, Darnell Martens, handled the arrangements for the Clinton-Gore charter jet (nicknamed Air Elvis), and they were flawless.

Thomason became a free-floating presence in the Clinton campaign—a sort of roving adviser who dropped into and out of the schedule at will. A native of Hampton, Arkansas, he and his wife, Linda Bloodworth-Thomason, were at the peak of their lucrative television-production careers, producing three sitcoms on the CBS roster. The Thomasons had known the Clintons for twenty years, and, in the vast concentric circles of Clinton acquaintances, they travelled in the very nearest orbit. After Clinton's disastrous nominating speech at the 1988 Democratic Convention, Harry and Linda arranged for Clinton to make an appearance on Johnny Carson's "Tonight Show," where he won the crowd by playing "Summertime" on the sax and telling self-deprecating jokes, written by Linda. In the hope of heading off any possible Billy Carter problems with Clinton's free-spirited half brother, Roger, the Thomasons acted as his minders, getting him work at their production company.

Thomason brought to the campaign his true expertise, which was staging. At Clinton's bleakest moment, Thomason flew to New Hampshire and threw himself into what was beginning to seem a lost cause. He quickly identified the TV-call-in-show format as Clinton's natural métier; he picked out the chairs used in the debate with other candidates, and even helped lay the carpet. Mostly, Thomason was an uplifting presence for Clinton, who invariably brightened when he showed up. He seemed to have an instinct for what would make Clinton comfortable, as when the candidate had grown fat after gorging away his despair on late-night junk-food runs and looked as if he were bursting out of his clothes; Harry caused new suits to appear. He was a producer, he made things happen; Clinton was the talent.

The Thomasons' greatest campaign triumph was the Democratic National Convention, which Harry helped stage, culminating in the showing of Linda's twenty-minute paean to her friend, "The Man from Hope." After Clinton won, Harry also produced the Inauguration. The Thomasons were now the First Friends, and they were the Clintons' first overnight guests at the White House. Linda was so exhilarated that she jumped up and down on the bed in the Lincoln Bedroom.

Thomason returned to California, but in a couple of weeks he was back, this time to help out with Clinton's first speech to Congress. The high profile of First Friendship inevitably subjected the couple from Hollywood to some caricature (Maureen Dowd and Frank Rich, writing in the *Times*, referred to Linda as "the neo-Dogpatch sitcom tycoon"), but the Thomasons worked hard at nurturing an anti-Hollywood image. They lived in the San Fernando Valley, not Beverly Hills, and eschewed the show-biz money-worship culture, spending lavishly on charity projects. Harry, in particular, would have denied getting any special thrill from the nearness to power. Still, he did keep a hand in. He could often be seen around the White House, popping his head into the offices of senior staffers, passing ideas to this or that



"It's very male."

aide. Once, Watkins asked the chief of staff, Mack McLarty, what, exactly, it was that Harry did at the White House, and McLarty, after pausing, had to allow, "I don't know."

One of the things Thomason did was act as a conduit between his partner Darnell Martens at TRM and top people in the White House, including the President. Thomason had met Martens when he went shopping for a plane, and Martens, an aviation expert, helped him find the right one. Thomason liked the younger man; when Martens told him that his mother was an enthusiastic fan of Thomason's "Designing Women," Harry arranged for her to see the show and meet the cast. Darnell was hungry, and Thomason, a millionaire, was plainly able to help a young man with ambitions, and he did. In 1991, Thomason invested twenty-five thousand dollars and induced his agent, Dan Richland, to do the same. Martens set up T(homason) R(ichland) M(artens), Inc., the aviation consulting company that proved so useful in the campaign.

Martens knew that he had helped the campaign and, now that Clinton was in the White House, he apparently believed that, with Thomason's help, Clinton could help him. On January 29, 1993, nine days after Clinton's Inauguration, Martens sent Thomason a memorandum outlining ways that TRM could "pursue Washington opportunities." He suggested a name change for the company, to Harry Thomason & Associates, in order to "capitalize on 'Thomason' name recognition." Then, to get a foot in the door, he suggested that TRM should "obtain some form of official status as advisors to the White House for general aviation policy matters," and he also proposed a TRM review of all nonmilitary government aircraft, as a way of identifying possible cost savings. He suggested that TRM be empowered to determine who controlled scheduling of White House press aircraft, and noted, "This can be done by TRM much as the campaign aircraft were handled."

Two weeks later, in a Cabinet meeting that was televised, President Clinton said that a "staff member" had told him there were big savings to be had in a review of government aircraft. Encouraged, Martens sent another memo to Thomason describing his latest research. Now that the President seemed to him to be on board, Martens pointed out that TRM had coördinated all the Clinton-Gore travel and was perfectly suited to the job of auditing the government fleet, which operated on budgets totalling hundreds of millions of dollars. "This is the project for which I have trained for nineteen years," Martens wrote his partner. "I know the aircraft—I understand the budgets. Put me in front of the right person at the White House and I will prove the value of both the project and Thomason's capabilities."

Martens sent that memorandum on February 11th. Five days later, Thomason had a meeting with the President, went bowling with him in the White House bowling alley, and spent the night. The next day, Martens's "Put me in front of the right person" memo was stamped "The President has seen" and was sent to senior staff for "action," with a handwritten note from the President in the margin: "These guys are sharp."

DAVID WATKINS had been rewarded for his role in the campaign with the offer of a top White House job—assistant to the President for management and administration—which roughly paralleled his job in the campaign: running operations. The position not only would give him something to tell his grandchildren one day but could lead, it was easy to imagine, to something quite rewarding after he left government service. He and his wife, Ileene, talked it over, and quickly decided to accept. "Gosh, we had so much promise," he recalls. "I wanted to be part of history."

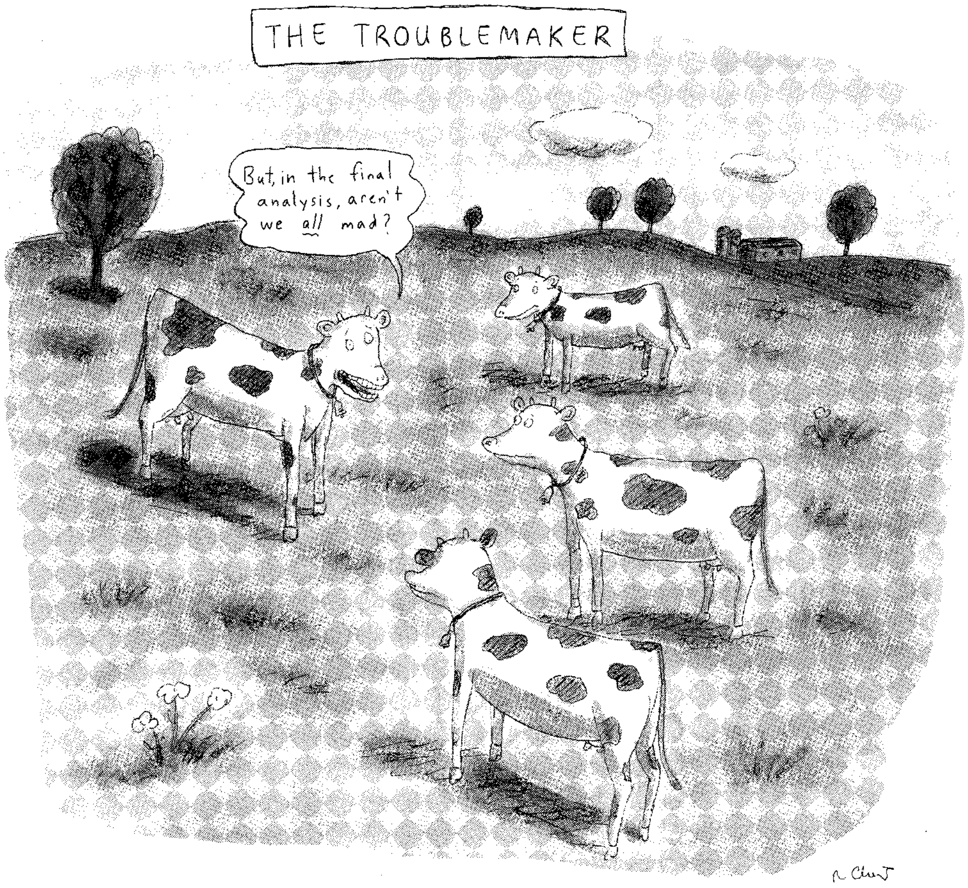
Just as Watkins had been one of the first in the campaign, he was one of the first to arrive in Washington. During the transition, while hundreds of other job aspirants were going to Little Rock, Watkins set up in the Old Executive Office Building and began to organize the new Clinton White House—planning office space, assessing the communications system, and so on. It was a particularly challenging task, for Clinton had promised in the campaign—rashly, many staffers later came to believe—to cut White House staff by twenty-five per cent, and it was a promise he meant to keep. Part of Watkins's job was to discover places to make those cuts.

Soon after Watkins arrived, he got

CUSTOMER SERVICE
KOREN

"You'll find our Boulevardier Department on six, the Dandy's Department on seven, and our Fop's Corner on eight!"

a call from Little Rock on behalf of Catherine Cornelius. It seemed that she had been left out of the patronage distribution. Cornelius believed she had done a good job in the campaign, and she now had a particular expertise—managing travel—that she was not inclined to keep hidden. Even before the Inauguration, she wrote a memo to Watkins suggesting ways that the White House travel office, which fell under Watkins's range of responsibilities, could be better managed. Indeed, she met twice with Watkins in Little Rock to discuss the matter, and at the second meeting, with Betta Carney present, the idea of "outsourcing" White House press travel was discussed. (Carney's World Wide Travel was an obvious choice to receive the business.) Watkins listened without making a commitment. But, because of Cornelius's help in the campaign, he felt obliged to find a slot for her in the White House. It wouldn't be the travel office, he told her, but, if she would agree to work as his assistant ("an awful job . . . not a big paying job") for six months, he would find her a more accommodating position. Cornelius agreed, and went to Washington on Watkins's terms. Within a week, she made a move on the travel office.


THE TROUBLEMAKER
But, in the final analysis, aren't we all mad?

To Cornelius, the White House travel office must have seemed—as it would have to any of the others who had served on the tight ship of the campaign's travel operation—an appallingly inept, if not malfeasant, operation. The office had a staff of seven, and was run by a man named Billy R. Dale—a personable, soft-spoken Virginian who had been there for nearly thirty-two years—in a casual manner that approached recklessness. Dale had no particular accounting system, he kept no general ledger, and he guessed at the cost of each White House press journey, adding to or taking from the office's reserve of funds as needed, depending upon the accuracy of his estimate. Money collected from the press for Presidential trips—hundreds of thousands of dollars—was sometimes kept in drawers (or even, it turned out, in his personal checking account, if that happened to be convenient). Cornelius had no specific knowledge of any of this yet, but she seemed to have a strong notion that the office was sloppily managed. She may have picked up the notion from a man with whom she was involved in a personal relationship: Jeff Eller, a lawyer working with the press (he eventually became director of media affairs at the Clinton White House), who had heard tales of Dale's laxity. In December, Eller had gone as far as to tell a reporter that there were problems at the White House travel office.

Watkins planned to make changes in travel as part of Clinton's mandate for twenty-five-per-cent cuts. However, he didn't intend to address the issue until the summer of 1993, and he certainly didn't expect to put Cornelius in charge of the office. He considered her bright and hardworking, but he also thought her naïve and too inexperienced for a management position. So when, after a week as his assistant, Cornelius sent him a memorandum about the travel office, Watkins paid it little regard, and when he wanted a travel-office report shortly thereafter he assigned the task to another of his aides, Matthew Moore. This angered Cornelius, and she said so; Watkins, relenting, invited Cornelius and another assistant, Clarissa Cerda, to prepare their own travel-office report. In mid-February, Cornelius gave Watkins an eight-page "Briefing Book and Proposal"—a blueprint for completely reorganizing the travel office, with Cornelius and Cerda installed as co-directors. Watkins skimmed the document until he reached the organizational chart, with his two young assistants at the top, whereupon he put it aside and forgot about it.

Cornelius, after being on the White House payroll for little more than a month, pronounced her assignment unbearably menial, even "abusive," and asked Watkins for a better job. He tried to transfer her to the White House military office, but that fell through, and in April, relenting again, he transferred Cornelius to the travel office.

Watkins told Cornelius to keep her eyes open in her new assignment. She then began an undercover investigation. In her first several weeks at the travel office, Cornelius spent her spare time sleuthing, which is to say snatching files and copying records and eavesdropping on office chatter. Detecting was not one of her talents, however. While she was secretly copying checks, she managed to jam the duplicating machine, and on another occasion she found herself locked out of a filing cabinet when she tried to return some documents she had secretly taken away for study. On being discovered, she was isolated by the rest of the travel-office staff—a fact that became another indictment in the "case" she was building against the seven travel workers.

Cornelius's hapless career as a whistle-blower might have played itself out harmlessly if her preoccupation with the travel office hadn't intersected with Harry Thomason. But it had, momentously.

FOR the Clintons, the first months of the Administration had been disastrous, what with the dispute over gays in the military, the failed nominations of the President's first two choices for Attorney General, the Waco disaster, and a number of lesser missteps. Clinton seemed a rudderless, and even a confused, leader, and his approval rating reflected it, plunging from seventy-one per cent to fifty-six per cent during his first hundred days. The President had an image problem, and Thomason was there to help. Rahm Emmanuel, the White House political director, put Thomason in charge of something called the White House Project, advising staff members on ways to better stage Presidential events, among them little things like positioning the President in photo ops in a manner that didn't make it seem that houseplants were growing out of his head. After an urgent directive from the First Lady's office, Thomason was given a White House pass, with wide-ranging access, and was allowed temporary use of an office in the East Wing. But his broader purpose was to lift morale, to try to raise the Presidential spirits, just as he had during the campaign.

Meanwhile, Darnell Martens, Thomason's aviation partner, had been continuing his effort to land some government business. In February, Thomason had told Martens to talk to the White House press secretary, Dee Dee Myers, about having TRM determine who controlled the scheduling of White House press aircraft. Myers had suggested that Martens speak with Billy Dale. Martens had telephoned Dale but found him much less accommodating than the other White House people he had met through Thomason's good name. According to Martens, Dale told him stiffly that there was no combination of prices and service which could earn White House business for TRM, and advised him not to "waste his time discussing the matter." Martens said that when he tried to persuade Dale that TRM could provide much more efficient air travel for the White House press, Dale had responded, "I have been here thirty-one years and no one has seen fit to replace me with a commercial operation yet. So until they do I will continue to handle this without your help."

In a March 5th memorandum to Thomason—marked "Confidential"—Martens reported this apparent lack of interest in opening the travel office to competitive bidding, and suggested that he might have uncovered a disturbing circumstance that could explain Billy Dale's hostility: the White House travel office did business primarily with "a Republican-operated charter airline" that was motivated by "a decidedly anti-Clinton philosophy . . . inconsistent with the current Administration." Billy Dale, Martens wrote, had full knowledge of this supposed political bias—indeed, had been a party to it. (The political charges have never been verified.)

Martens's report apparently had the desired effect: it excited Thomason's outrage, and he remarked to someone that "this guy at the travel office is the most arrogant guy I have ever encountered." Thomason determined to do something about this unacceptable situation, as a good deed for his friends in the White House, where he appeared more and more frequently throughout the spring.

While Martens pursued his personal investigation, Thomason mentioned in a conversation with the President that there was trouble in the White House travel office. Thomason also called David

A SLAVE TO LUST

Nathan Lane, as the Roman denizen Pseudolus, stands surrounded by courtesans in the revival of "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum," the Sondheim-Gelbart-Shevelove musical opening April 18th at Broadway's St. James Theatre. The temptresses are: the Geminae (Susan Misner and Lori Werner), Gymnasia (Stephanie Pope), Tintanabula (Pamela Everett), Vibrata (Mary Ann Lamb), and Panacea (Leigh Zimmerman).

Photographed by Chris Callis, New York City, April 2, 1996.

Victoria Roberts

"The wrangler within wants pancakes."

Watkins, and told him that the travel-office employees were crooks and should be fired, and that it would make a good story. Watkins had known Harry Thomason since the days when both men were just starting their careers—Watkins as a young advertising executive, Thomason as a striving filmmaker who would occasionally come by looking for film work. More significant, Watkins knew how close Thomason was to the President and the First Lady, so his call registered with him.

The week of May 10th was a particularly busy one for Thomason at the White House. On the tenth, which was a Monday, he arrived before nine-thirty and stayed all day. He asked Martens to fax his memorandum to the White House, and he also dropped in on Watkins and chatted about the travel office. He asked Watkins if he had done anything about the problem, and Watkins said yes—he had assigned Catherine Cornelius to the office with instructions to observe the staff. Watkins suggested that Thomason should meet with Cornelius, and he set up the meeting. Thomason left the White House at six-twenty that evening.

On May 12th, Thomason began his day at the White House with a meeting with President Clinton at eight-thirty. Later that morning, he went to see Vince Foster, the deputy White House counsel, in his office. Thomason had called Foster saying that he wanted to see him about "family issues," which turned out to involve the President's mother and his brother, Roger. Thomason made a good impression. Foster didn't know precisely what Thomason was doing at the White House, but he wrote in his notebook, "He is obviously motivated to pick up morale, keep up advance team, even train." At the end of their conversation, Foster also noted, Thomason mentioned that he "may have learned of some graft," and promised to let Foster know when he learned more.

On leaving Foster, Thomason walked to the East Wing to see Catherine Cornelius. They talked about the travel office for the better part of an hour, and Cornelius showed Thomason some of her copied documents. Fired up, they headed for Watkins's office, where they were joined by Darnell Martens (who that day received his own White House pass) for a session on the alleged wrongdoing in the travel office. According to a chronology put together by the congressional committee investigating Travelgate, Thomason said, "These guys are ripping us off," and he suggested again that decisive action would be "a great press story, Bill Clinton cleaning house." The meeting turned to Watkins. He hesitated. "Well, let me think about what to do," he said, and the meeting broke up.

Thomason then stopped in to see the First Lady, and here, too, one subject was the travel office. Bill Clinton had promised that his relationship with Mrs. Clinton would be "an unprecedented partnership," and although she had no formal authority over the travel office, she did wield great authority in White House operational and personnel decisions. Mrs. Clinton is said to have urged Thomason to "stay ahead of this," and agreed that uprooting corruption in the travel office would generate some positive press. By now, all these converging voices had pushed the travel-office issue from a matter of efficiency to one of wrongdoing; the seven employees had become suspects, and no one had yet asked any of them for an explanation.

After lunch, Thomason returned to Watkins's office, popped his head in, and, according to Watkins, said he had seen Mrs. Clinton "and she's ready to fire them all."

THAT decided it for Watkins, but he was not about to act on his own. He felt he had to see Vince Foster. Foster was Hillary Clinton's close friend and adviser. If anyone could read her, Foster could; he would know what to do.

When Watkins called, at about two-forty, asking for an urgent meeting, Foster said, "I don't have long," and explained that he had a barber's appointment outside the White House at three-thirty. "Let's get started," Watkins said. He gathered Cornelius and Thomason, and they headed for Foster's office, on the floor above the Oval Office.

Knowing that Foster was pressed for time, Watkins gave a quick overview of the situation. He told Foster he had planned a reorganization of the travel office eventually as part of his long-term review of White House operations, and he introduced Cornelius. She said that she had been "isolated" by the travel staff, and that that move had prompted her covert investigation and the discovery of, among other things, checks totalling seventy-two thousand dollars made out to "Cash." Thomason said he had heard from a source in the aviation business that the travel office solicited kickbacks from charter companies wanting White House business, though Foster, apparently, didn't find the allegation convincing. ("HT related very vague conversation relating to friend," he later noted, and in fact nothing ever came of it.) Watkins asked Foster for his advice. The White House lawyer wanted to know if Watkins had the capacity to audit the travel office, and Watkins said no. Foster could see that further discussion was required, and before leaving for his haircut he asked Cornelius to fetch her file and for everyone to meet again later that afternoon.

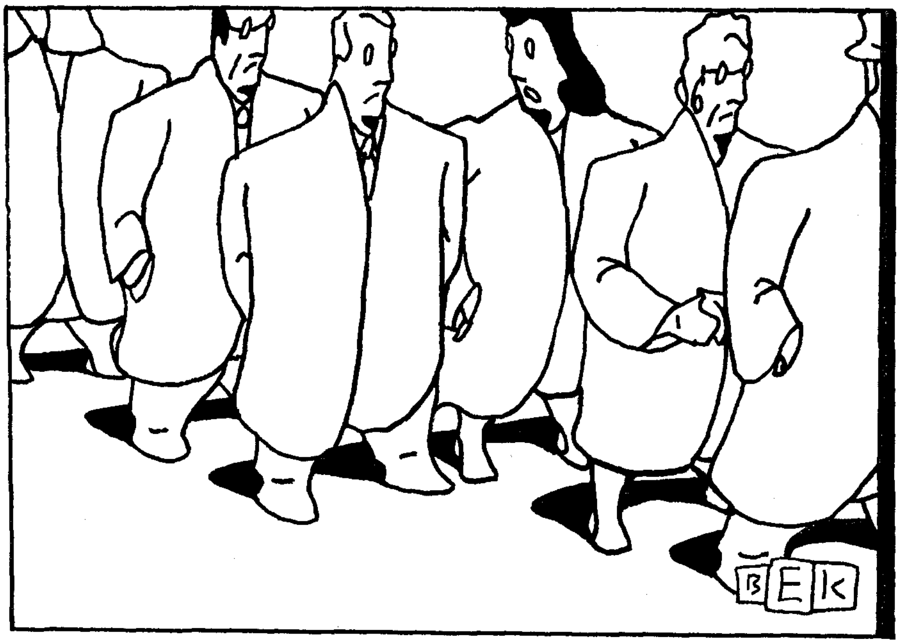
After his appointment, Foster met up with the White House associate counsel, William H. Kennedy III—another Rose Law Firm hand—and asked him to sit in on the second meeting. Cornelius showed Foster her copies of travel records and the checks made out to "Cash," and told how she had been "isolated" in a "soundproof room." She said that the men in the office "used racist and sexist language" (but noted that they had not sexually harassed her), and that some of them seemed to be living well beyond their means. They owned racehorses and lakefront vacation homes—things that she couldn't see how they could afford on their salaries. Watkins had heard this before from Cornelius, and had discounted it as youthful speculation. Foster, too, seemed dubious, noting later that Cornelius had made these observations "despite the fact she'd been isolated."

Significantly, Thomason, who had impressed Foster that morning as being keen on improving the President's image, offered his opinion that "it would be a great story to replace the old staff with new staff who could save money." Watkins noted that the travel staffers could be fired "at will" without cause, because they served at the pleasure of the President. But firing people of long service without cause could be dangerous public relations, devaluing the "great story," and, as someone in the meeting pointed out, Billy Dale and his staff seemed to have good relations with the press. (Dale was, in fact, beloved by the travelling press corps, although the president of the White House Correspondents' Association had recently complained about the rising costs of press travel.) Foster conceded that he and Kennedy couldn't ignore such serious charges, but he later noted, "There could be nothing there." How to find out? With no auditing capability, there was the problem of getting information that "will show cause and possibly criminal conduct," Foster noted. But Kennedy, who handled White House security issues, said that he regularly spoke with someone at the F.B.I., and would seek the Bureau's advice on how to proceed—an impulsive decision that would prove extremely unfortunate for the Administration.

The issue was now clearly posed. On the basis of the speculations of a young former campaign worker (none of the people at the meeting yet knew she was the President's cousin), which she had deduced from her amateurish investigation, and the vague allegations of a Hollywood pal of the President's, whatever his good intentions, should the White House senior staff, under the direction of its counsel's office, seek to establish wrongdoing on the part of the in-house travel agents in order to produce a "great story"? Everything about Vince Foster—his instinct for caution, his innate decency—dictated a course of thoughtful restraint. But the move to act against the travel staff already had powerful momentum, and it soon gained more.

THE next day—Thursday, May 13th—Foster had a late lunch and then went to see the First Lady. They discussed her health-care project—an operation over which she did have formal authority—and then she brought up the travel office. "Are you on top of it?" she asked. Later, trying to describe her mood, Foster wrote "general impatience" and then, seeking a better word, chose "general frustration." As for his answer to her question, he wrote, "I responded we just heard about it yesterday," and he assured the First Lady that Kennedy was already looking into it.

There is little doubt that Mrs. Clinton's interest intensified the sense of urgency that was now driving the travel-office matter. Dealing with the wishes of a First Lady is a tricky matter for any White House staff, and Mrs. Clinton's power was not merely inferred. She had been an influential adviser to her husband throughout his political life, but in Arkansas she had had a separate career, practicing law at the Rose firm. She wasn't in and around the Governor's Mansion all day, involving herself in daily business, which some Clinton people thought was just as well. As patently smart as she was, and as much as her discipline and fierce will to prevail made her an asset, the pure political talent in the family belonged almost entirely to Bill. Hillary was infinitely less apt than her husband at sensing what the public would countenance, as she showed in the image she projected during Clinton's first term as governor, when she insisted on keeping her maiden name and was studiously indifferent to such trivial matters as personal style. John Brummett, an Arkansas journalist who covered the Clinton era in the state, says, "She has no willingness to adapt to circumstances. It's her way or no



"I forget—did we decide to see something life-affirming or something mind-numbing?"

way. You're either for her or against her."

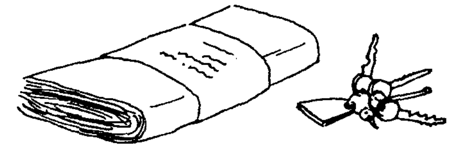
If in Little Rock Mrs. Clinton did not routinely involve herself in everyday management matters, in the White House she not only was in charge of her husband's biggest policy initiative—health care—but also exerted a presence that had to be reckoned with on other matters. This had been demonstrated very early, in the matter of the White House press corps. Mrs. Clinton was deeply distrustful of the news media, and shortly after the Inauguration she was behind the decision to end reporters' access to certain parts of the White House press office—a move that naturally created considerable resentment among the reporters. It was a bad start with the White House press, and it may have exacerbated an extremely awkward situation that had developed with the First Family in the early weeks of their life in the White House—the famous incident in February in which she was alleged to have smashed a lamp (or, in some media reports, to have thrown a Bible at the President). Mrs. Clinton, feeling beleaguered, assumed that the story, which she has said was false, had been leaked to the press by one of the Secret Service agents assigned to guard her and her family, and she was not entirely surprised, for she had been warned that potential trouble lay in the permanent staff assigned to the White House, whose loyalties were suspect. Prior to the leak, the First Lady had expressed particular discomfort with the Secret Service detail assigned to her family, and had asked Foster and Watkins to have it removed in favor of the detail that had been assigned to them during the campaign and the transition. Foster and Watkins went to see the Secret Service chief for the President's private security, John McGaw, who told them that he thought the Clintons were overreacting.

When the lamp story appeared in the press, Foster, Watkins, and McLarty were called in to a meeting in the Oval Office with the President and his wife and other senior staffers, at which Mrs. Clinton suggested that they had not been responsive enough to the First Family's wishes, and that their Arkansas manners and reserve were not suited to the alley fight that Washington presented. "You are too nice, too naïve," she told them. Later, Watkins, in a draft of his "soul cleansing" memorandum, which was written to McLarty but was never sent, specifically cited that incident as a motivating factor in the travel-office affair: "I was convinced that failure to take immediate action in this case would have been directly contrary to the wishes of the First Lady, something that would not have been tolerated in light of the Secret Service incident earlier in the year."

Mrs. Clinton was pained by all the bad publicity. What's more, her father, Hugh Rodham, who had suffered a stroke two months after the Inauguration, died in April. Those family concerns forced delays on the health-care plan, which had been promised for early May. She was not one to conceal her frustrations, and Vince Foster was particularly sensitive to her mood. Once her protector and closest friend inside the Rose firm, he was now her employee, and bore perhaps more than his share of her expressed frustration. "Vince took the brunt of the Hillary stuff," one Arkansan in the Clinton circle says. "Hillary would say things to Vince about others in the White House that she would not say to them directly. I will tell you that, for every chilling that Watkins or Mack got, Vince probably got about six. If she was mad at anyone—it didn't matter who it was—Vince got it." Another Arkansan who knew the Vince-Hillary relationship well says of those difficult months, "She yelled at him all the time."

When Mrs. Clinton asked Foster if he was "on top of" the travel-office matter, on May 13th, that in itself would have motivated him to see it resolved. He and the First Lady had a second meeting that afternoon, and she again brought up the subject. Foster wrote in his notes that Mrs. Clinton conveyed "general frustration with management drift" and, later, that "HRC generally appeared less than satisfied with timeliness of decision-making, i.e. cloture." Apparently, Foster relayed those concerns more forcefully to Watkins, for Watkins's own notes covering this time mention "periodic reports from Vince Foster that First Lady had inquired about travel office + why wasn't action being taken—Report was that they should be fired immediately + out of here by the end of the day."

When, in the second meeting, Mrs. Clinton asked Foster about the travel office, he was able to give her news of some progress. Watkins had told Foster that he'd found an auditor, Larry Herman, of the firm KPMG Peat Marwick, which was already in the White House, working with Vice-President Gore on the "reinventing government" project, and that the management-review team had agreed to take a look at the travel office. "[We] will use outside auditors," Foster told her. "Let's see what's there."



Watkins's news about Peat Marwick was a welcome development, perhaps obviating the need for the F.B.I. investigation that Kennedy had been considering. The F.B.I.'s integrity resides in its independence from political pressures. Foster hadn't stopped Kennedy from making contact with the F.B.I., but Kennedy had said he meant only to seek "guidance." However, Kennedy may have been overemphatic in seeking the Bureau's help. According to the agents Kennedy first spoke to, he told them that "he was being directed at the highest level of the White House," and that if the F.B.I. couldn't help perhaps he could approach another agency, such as the Internal Revenue Service. (Kennedy disputes those agents' reports.) In any case, Foster met with two F.B.I. agents and told them, "We might have a better way"—a reference to the Peat Marwick audit—and asked them to hold off on their investigation.

By this time, travel-office fever had spread through the senior staff of the White House, and the debate was not over whether the staff should be dismissed but how, and when. Jeff Eller argued vigorously in favor of firing the staff immediately. He had been one of the proponents of the theory that the dismissals would make a good story, but he also cautioned that delay could backfire if the staff got wise and launched a counter-offensive with its friends in the press. Eller urged that the firings be announced Friday, May 14th, at 5 P.M. McLarty said that he didn't want to act precipitately—that he wanted things done "in a businesslike way"—and instructed that action be delayed until word from Peat Marwick was in.

The management review (it was not strictly an audit) began that Friday, under the pretense that the inspection was part of the reinventing-government project. Through the weekend, reports from the review team were awaited like dispatches from the battlefront. Watkins had flown South for his stepdaughter's college graduation, but he stayed in touch with the auditors. Watkins's notes record that

Foster "says he's getting more pressure from First Lady to *act.*" From Little Rock, and then from Memphis (where his stepdaughter's school was), Watkins checked with his deputy, Patsy Thomasson, nearly a dozen times for progress reports. She reported that the review team was finding sloppy records, missing cash that was unaccounted for, and general disarray—just the news that Watkins and the others expected. (The written report eventually produced by Peat Marwick was rather less dramatic in its tone than the reports that Watkins received that weekend, but all the allegations of wrongdoing were repeated in it.)

In a phone call from the White House on Friday evening, Foster had asked Watkins to report what he'd learned directly to the First Lady. As Watkins recounts the conversation, he began, "Vince has asked me to call you and tell you what's going on with regard to this review by Peat Marwick," and went on to tell the First Lady that the review team's reports were finding more than anyone expected. He said he would be in his office on Monday and would take "whatever action is necessary."

"Harry says his people can run things better," the First Lady said, according to Watkins. She said she had been told that it was a mistake to keep people held over from another Administration, and added, "We need to get those people out. We need our people in." Mrs. Clinton denies saying this. Recently, she issued a statement that read, in part, "I did not direct that any particular action should be taken, nor did I make particular comments about what should be done . . . *e.g.*, that I thought the Travel Office people 'should be out.' "

Watkins was already working on a strategy for keeping the travel office functioning once the staff was gone—an outcome that by this point no one involved in the matter doubted. The travel staff's work would be temporarily "outsourced" to World Wide Travel, and the office would be run by Catherine Cornelius. (Additionally, Darnell Martens had arranged for charter planes to be standing by. "Aircraft are being reviewed for Sun., if needed," Martens faxed to Harry Thomason. "I can be at the White House to assist 'C' as needed to begin operations.") Foster, meanwhile, had asked Thomason if he would benefit by the new arrangement, and Thomason assured him that he would not.

"Must you blue-pencil everything I say?"

• •

By Sunday night, the preliminary report was in from Peat Marwick, showing serious mismanagement, as had been expected. Although the final written report was not yet in, Watkins decided that he would fire the employees that week. (Vince Foster later wrote that the possibility of waiting for the final report was not discussed.) The seven travel-office staff members had still not been confronted with any accusations.

That night, May 16th, Mack McLarty had dinner with the President and the First Lady. She had spoken to him a few days earlier about the travel office, and it was discussed again at supper. McLarty summarized the essence of the conversation in a handwritten note: "HRC pressure."

The next morning, while Watkins was in his office reviewing the Peat Marwick report, McLarty stopped by. He talked about his dinner with the President and the First Lady the night before, and said that the travel office was on the First Lady's "radar screen." Watkins went to work on a memorandum for McLarty (which he dutifully cc'd to the First Lady), outlining the dismissals and laying out his temporary plan for running the travel office. At midday, Watkins received word that Billy Dale wanted to speak with him; when the two men did speak, around 5 P.M., Dale offered to resign. Watkins put him off, and explained that he would be holding a meeting for all travel-office employees two days later.

The quest for favorable news seemed particularly urgent that week, for the President was again caught in the vortex of a bad spin. The Belgian-born hair stylist Christophe (who had been introduced to Clinton by the Thomasons) had given the President a two-hundred-dollar haircut aboard Air Force One in Los Angeles, triggering another round of unfavorable news stories. On Wednesday, Watkins, citing the President's efficiency mandate, dismissed the seven employees of the White House travel office. They were given until the end of the day to gather their belongings and be gone.

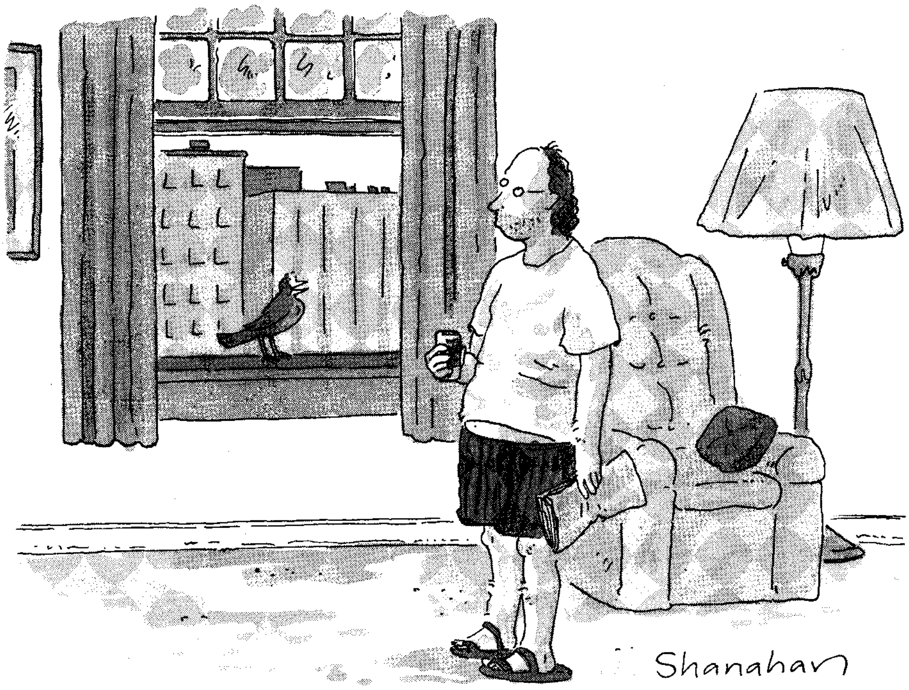
As it turned out, those who had advocated the firings because they would be a good story were right in thinking that Billy Dale and his colleagues had friends in the press. Dale had somehow obtained a copy of Catherine Cornelius's eight-page memorandum to Watkins in which she proposed a reorganized travel office with herself at the top, as well as the Martens memo pitching TRM for White House business; both memos were leaked to the Washington *Post* (Dale denies personal involvement in the leak), and the travel-office story became deliciously clear—the White House had sacked seven career employees without notice in order to benefit a Hollywood pal and a Clinton cousin. (The relationship was revealed on May 19th.) The fact that the employees served at the pleasure of the President and that there had been some dramatic mishandling of office records and funds was not unreported, but it paled next to the accusation of naked cronyism. Making matters worse was the emerging picture that the White House may have manipulated the F.B.I. in order to provide cover for the firings.

The F.B.I.'s involvement became part of the controversy through a disastrous misjudgment by David Watkins. On the day of the firings, Watkins prepared a set of "talking points" highlighting key issues to be referred to in dealings with the press—the White House line. The briefing paper posed the firings as part of the reinventing-government project, and also mentioned an F.B.I. audit, reflecting Watkins's belief that it would bolster the White House's case for the firings and generate the great story about how Bill Clinton was cleaning house. In reality, of course, the F.B.I. had become involved only at William Kennedy's insistence, and, far from having begun an investigation, it had not even participated—at Foster's request—in the Peat Marwick review. Watkins gave a copy of his "talking points" to Dee Dee Myers, the press secretary, and sent another copy to Foster. When Foster saw the reference to the F.B.I., he recognized a land mine and instructed Watkins to delete it. Watkins did, but he couldn't find Myers, who had gone to Capitol Hill and, as it turned out, had already told a reporter about the F.B.I. "audit."

Just the fact of revealing an ongoing Bureau inquiry was bad enough—such a revelation is strictly against Bureau rules—but the intimation of a White House-F.B.I. collaboration was about to become painful. When reporters inevitably began asking about the justification for the firings, the White House and the Bureau seemed to be saying two different things. The F.B.I.'s first press response said only that the Bureau was awaiting the final Peat Marwick report and "will analyze their findings and conduct appropriate investigation." That was not exactly language mandating the drastic action of firing the office workers, or even of announcing that they were F.B.I. suspects. The Bureau's spokesman, John Collingwood, was summoned to a meeting in the office of George Stephanopoulos, the White House communications director. At the meeting, which Foster attended, the White House communications people asked if the F.B.I. couldn't use stronger language, and Collingwood agreed to their request. Word of that White House meeting and the change it produced soon got out, and the result, predictably, was disastrous. The "great story" had become another sign of a White House not up to the task of governing. Editorialists scolded, and Republicans clamored for a congressional investigation.

One unforeseen consequence of all this ineptitude was the devastation of Vince Foster. He alone appeared to realize the scope of the management failure, and its potential consequences. His wife, Lisa, couldn't comprehend his reaction to what she saw as a minor dustup, especially since the firings weren't his doing anyway. "It's not your fault," she kept telling him, but Foster—so determined always to do the right thing—took the disaster personally: he had been in charge, and he surely knew that his effort to be responsive to the wishes of his "client" might now lead to her exposure.

The White House geared up for damage control. Watkins was instructed to fire Betta Carney's staff. Stephanopoulos announced that five dismissed travel-office workers, who had not handled the accounts—but had been tainted as F.B.I. suspects—would be put on administrative leave and that new government jobs would be found for them. And the White House announced that it would conduct its own thorough review of the lamentable blunder. The inquiry would be led by John Podesta, the White House staff secretary, and his assistant, Todd Stern, who were both lawyers. The First Lady's involvement was an extremely sensitive issue in the White House, raising again the matter of the famous Clinton "twoferism." Like so many of the distresses vexing the Clintons, it would seem in retrospect a puzzling case of their trying to cover up something that wasn't really much more than an embarrassment. Even if Mrs. Clinton, believing that there was incompetence or worse in the travel office, had instigated the firings, what was she guilty of? Meddling? The fact is, though, that that was precisely the perception the White House wanted to avoid. Mrs. Clinton's shared, though un-



"Hi! I'm the Bluebird of Happiness. Can I get your ex-wife's new address?"

THE BOLT

That girl so long ago walked, as they all did, shopgirls,
Little cousins, and church friends, to the unflattering
Hack of the hem just where the calf begins to swell,
Felt ruchings of the bodice's stiff panels
Gall the flesh beside the flattening ornate
Armature of underwear (like pads and straps
For livestock, fretted by tooling and bright studs),
So she must yank her knees against
Pounds of rigid drapery in the storm of heat,

Trailing through the pestering, gray heads
Of Queen Anne's lace, wind ravelling
Her hair and sweeping through prolific
Jagged-bladed grass—a wind that pressed down
There like God with both His hands, mashing the air,
Darkening the hole where the dry mouth of the wood
Yawned to drink the stumbling travellers already touched
By the heavy sacs of rain that broke and ran
In gouts down saturated pleats of serge . . .

Here that girl ran last, so long ago, to be run through
By one long lightning thread that entered, through
A slender purple bruise, the creamy skin of her temple.

The instant that it happened, nobody remembered
How she looked or spoke, so quickly had she blended
With this evocation of her having been.

This was the past: a stroke of imagery stare-
Frozen, finished in suspension.

—MARY KINZIE

elected, power had come to be seen as a political liability. As Bill Clinton began to define his Presidency—with executive orders protecting abortion rights and gays in the military, and with the selection of a Cabinet that "looked like America," and so on—there was a growing sense that the so-called New Democrat centrist had ceded primacy to his wife's liberal agenda. It was a partisan assumption, and, while it was only partly true, it was powerful nonetheless. (The conservative syndicated columnist Tony Snow soon picked up on the theme of Mrs. Clinton, unappointed and unelected, exercising administrative power in the travel-office matter.) The last thing the Clintons needed was Travelgate as evidence of Hillary Clinton's sway.

Foster was determined not to let that happen. When his turn came to be interviewed by Podesta and Stern, he told them, "I assume many of the conversations I had were privileged." In the interview that followed, it is plain which conversations Foster deemed privileged—those he had with his "client." He gave the interviewers a chronology of events, including even his barber's appointment, but he did not mention the First Lady. Toward the end of the session, Todd Stern seemed to be edging toward the issue of Mrs. Clinton by asking Foster if "anyone else" was "involved." Foster cut Stern off with "I think that's all I should say about that."

Watkins also tried, though less determinedly, to protect the First Lady. In his session in Podesta's office, he was asked if he had anything to say about Mrs. Clinton, and he replied "No." Later, Foster asked him about the interview, and Watkins, the former Army officer, said, "I fell on my sword"—a line he also used with Mack McLarty. In a note written at the time, Watkins mused, "Is the real story to be told?"

But Podesta was able to discern the First Lady's involvement anyway—the fact that Watkins had cc'd Mrs. Clinton on his memo outlining the firings was a pretty good hint—and it was evident that the issue would have to be addressed. Podesta went to Foster for another session. They met on June 30th in Foster's office, and this time Foster, pressed, gave a grudging sketch of Mrs. Clinton's role. He told of the two meetings he had had with her, in which she asked what was being done about the travel office, and, in a strikingly qualified concession, he admitted that "I may have had a few short, incidental, non-substantive discussions subsequently" with the First Lady.

Even at the outset of the inquiry, Stern sensed that Mrs. Clinton's role might have been significant. In handwritten notes dated May 27th, he considered the problem facing him and his colleague: "If we do any kind of report &*fail* to address these q[uestion]s, press jumps on you wanting to know answers; while if you give answers that aren't fully honest (e.g., nothing re HRC) you risk hugely compounding the problem by getting caught in half-truths. You run risk of turning this into a 'coverup.' " Stern noted almost hopefully that there was a chance that the whole thing would merely be blamed on incompetence, but he lamented that the press "will want to get to the bottom of it. It's their nature." He also posed the possibility of simply telling the truth. "We need to think seriously about whether or not it won't be better to come clean, even to point of conceding that HRC had some interest."

The "White House Travel Office Management Review," issued by Podesta just before the July 4th weekend, was a strikingly harsh criticism of the management process that had led to the travel-office firings. Kennedy, Cornelius, Eller, and Watkins were singled out for reprimands, and the reviewers concluded that "Thomason should have avoided continued involvement in a matter . . . in which there was an appearance of financial conflict of interest," and blamed "lax procedures" for his "continued participation" and free-ranging influence. As it happened, Foster's and Watkins's wives played tennis together on the day the report came out, and when they heard the news Lisa Foster was astonished that Vince hadn't been one of those reprimanded. He had accepted blame, and had fully expected to shoulder it. Watkins, in contrast, was bitterly angry over the report, which seemed to blame him even for Harry Thomason's role. When McLarty told him about the reprimand, he sarcastically asked, "Does this mean I don't get to work in government anymore?" Watkins felt that he had done the bidding of his client, the First Lady, that he had protected her from exposure, and that his reward was a public rebuke. He stewed for a time, and finally decided to put down in writing what he called "a soul cleansing, carefully detailing the surrounding circumstances and the pressures that demanded that action be taken immediately." In it, using words he later came to regret, Watkins wrote, "It is my first attempt to be sure the record is straight, something I have not done in previous conversations with investigators—where I have been as protective and vague as possible." In the memo, Watkins also attempted to answer the offending findings of the Podesta report point by point, and recalled the Secret Service incident, noting that "the First Lady in particular was extremely upset with the delayed action in that case." He proceeded to draw a picture of her involvement in Travelgate, beginning with Harry Thomason's conversations and continuing all the way through—to "her insistence that the situation be resolved immediately by replacing the Travel Office staff." He and McLarty, he went on, "both knew there would be hell to pay if, after our failure in the Secret Service situation earlier, we failed to take swift and decisive action in conformity with the First Lady's wishes." The memorandum became public on January 3rd of this year, after it was discovered by the White House and released to the House Government Reform and Oversight Committee.

Vince Foster, for his part, had reason to find comfort in the Podesta report. He had not been reprimanded, and, more important, the First Lady had been mentioned only in passing. However, he was not comforted; instead, he slipped into a crippling depression, seized by anxiety over what might still lie ahead. His family and his close friends knew that he was deeply worried about a congressional hearing, but they couldn't fathom the depth of his despair, and their efforts to lift it were unavailing. Foster seemed obsessed with the issue, urging that the Clintons hire outside lawyers, and searching for legal representation for himself. How would he respond to a partisan probe into the matter, he asked himself. How would he answer questions about Mrs. Clinton's involvement?

Foster was gripped by a deepening emotional illness, yet among the Clinton inner circle he alone seemed able to picture the circumstances with clarity. The evidence suggests that it is likely that he glimpsed in advance the scenario that did in fact occur—the ceaseless inquiries that have placed David Watkins under investigation and led to Hillary Clinton's being hounded by congressional committees. Indeed, in addition to hearings by the House Government Reform and Oversight Committee and Senator Alfonse D'Amato's special committee investigating Whitewater, four separate organizations—the White House, the F.B.I., the General Accounting Office, and the Department of Justice—have all produced detailed reports on Travelgate.

In a spiral notebook Foster laid out the particulars of the case, and, whether he intended to do so or not, he sketched the defense that the White House has followed in regard to the First Lady: "Defend management decision, thereby defend HRC role whatever it was in fact or might have been misperceived to be."

EIGHT months after Foster's death, an official from the General Accounting Office put the issue of Mrs. Clinton's influence on the travel-office matter directly to the First Lady: "How would you describe and to whom would you attribute the origin of the decision to remove the Travel Office employees? How would you characterize your role in that decision?"

Mrs. Clinton gave her response, in April of 1994, through a White House lawyer, Neil Eggleston. "Mrs. Clinton does not know the origin of the decision to remove the White House Travel Office employees," the response said. "Mrs. Clinton was aware that Mr. Watkins was undertaking a review of the situation in the Travel Office, but she had no role in the decision to terminate the employees."

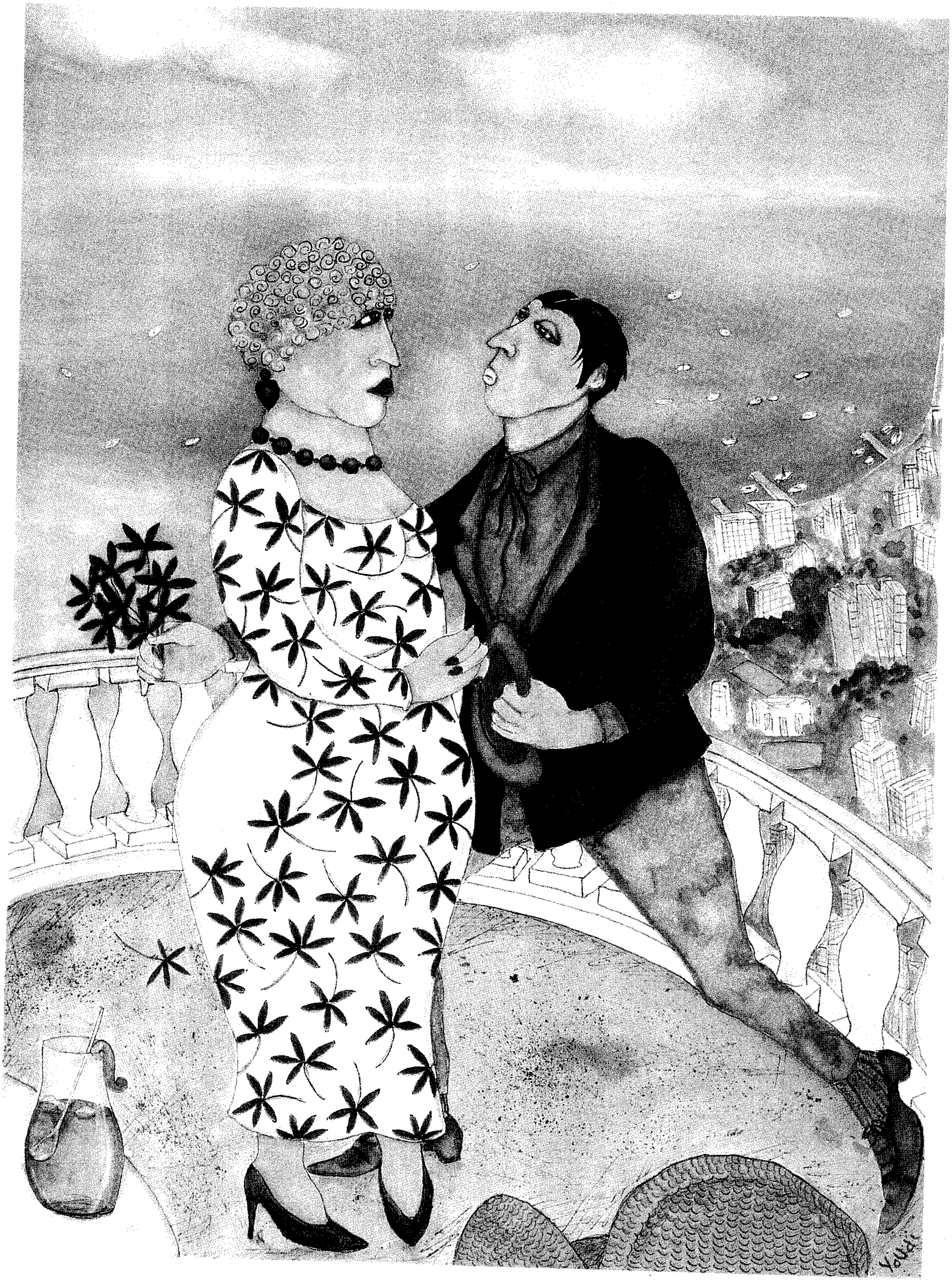
That statement served as Mrs. Clinton's final word on the subject until the revelation of the Watkins memorandum made it plain that either Watkins had lied—in a memo he never sent—or Mrs. Clinton had been less than forthcoming. The House Government Reform and Oversight Committee, now controlled by Republicans, seized on the opening and went after Mrs. Clinton again, serving her with a twenty-six-question interrogatory about her role in the travel-office firings and pointedly asking about her earlier statements to the G.A.O. The questions carried an ominous subtext—that knowingly giving false answers could be criminal. This time, Mrs. Clinton's answers, on March 21st of this year, came in a sworn statement. She stood by her answers to the G.A.O. but elaborated on them. She contradicted Watkins's account, denying that she had told him to fire the travel staff, but conceded, in lawyerly phrasing, "Although I had no decision-making role with regard to the removal of the Travel Office employees . . . I expressed my concern . . . that if there were fiscal mismanagement in the Travel Office or in any part of the White House it should be addressed promptly. I am sure I felt such action could include, if necessary and justified, appropriate personnel actions so that this Administration would not be blamed for condoning any existing fiscal mismanagement problems."

As scandal, Travelgate lends itself to the argument of Clinton supporters that there is nothing to be got at there, no blatant crimes or misdemeanors. But that is what makes it the perfect emblem of the distresses that have visited the Clintons from the start—the discovery of low impulses in high-minded people. As with the cattle-futures windfall, or with the misbegotten Whitewater alliance with Jim McDougal, the travel-office affair began as a relatively petty embarrassment, and was exponentially magnified by a determined reluctance subsequently to own up.

TRAVELGATE revealed to Harry and Linda Thomason the downside of First Friendship, and they exchanged their high-profile Washington presence for the relative calm of Hollywood. Harry's role regarding the travel office had been prominently cited in the Podesta report, and had prompted new rules controlling White House access. Before

EASEL • BY YOUDI DES AUBRYS

THE GIGOLO



"Sorry, we're all cat people. The dog people are in that boat over there."

leaving town, however, the Thomasons held forth in a series of interviews, in which they meant to make clear their take on the Washington experience. Any suggestion that the Thomasons would use their friendship with the Clintons for business gain was ludicrous, Linda said, for, "given our salaries, setting our sights on the White House travel office would be the financial equivalent of us taking over someone's lemonade stand." She declared Washington an "incestuous insane asylum," and said that if well-meaning people like them met with such inhospitality "Mother Teresa better stay out of town." And then they left. (Thomason has since been hit with an eighty-million-dollar libel suit by the former C.E.O. of a company accused of paying kickbacks to the travel office. A motion to dismiss is pending.)

The Travelgate fallout was even more traumatic for Billy Dale, whose laxity in handling travel-office funds had included parking some of the money in his own checking account. That led to his indictment in 1994 on charges of embezzlement. Although Dale never denied putting the travel-office money in his own account, he strenuously maintained that he was not a thief but merely a sloppy manager. As his legal bills mounted, he even agreed to plead guilty to putting the funds in his own account, which is, strictly defined, criminal embezzlement, but he insisted upon a statement in the plea agreement acknowledging that he had never spent a dime of the money on himself. The government refused the deal, and pressed the case to trial. A line of prominent Washington journalists testified that Billy Dale was no crook, and the prosecution was unable to establish that Dale had used any of the travel money for himself. The jury acquitted him after deliberating for less than two hours.

Catherine Cornelius was reassigned, to the White House personnel office; she is now its deputy director. According to Watkins's notes, she said that no one could ask her "to leave or be transferred" except Mack McLarty or the President. Jeff Eller later resigned as the White House director of media affairs and is currently working as a political consultant in Texas.

For David Watkins, the travel-office affair began a long, untidy process of separation from the Clintons. After reprimanding him for Travelgate, the White House had signalled that his future as a senior aide was uncertain at best, and in the summer of 1993 he began looking for a job. The White House, meanwhile, was edging him toward the door, but with some caution. Watkins presented the Clintons with a particular problem. He had been dutifully "protective and vague" in recounting his story to investigators. He had not gone public with his story—he hadn't even sent his memo to McLarty although he had given a copy to Patsy Thomasson, in whose files the memo was eventually found). But Watkins's protectiveness had its limits. In July of 1993, Watkins sketched some elements of his story for F.B.I. agents who were investigating Billy Dale, and in December he mentioned the First Lady's involvement in a session with interviewers from the G.A.O. while Neil Eggleston, the White House lawyer, was in attendance.

In January of 1994, Watkins was moved out of the White House and back into the Old Executive Office Building. Still he tarried, believing himself a faithful member of the team. Then, on May 2nd, the General Accounting Office issued its report on Travelgate, citing Watkins's account of his conversation with the First Lady in which "she urged that action be taken to get 'our people' into the Travel Office." In her written responses to the G.A.O.'s questions about that conversation, Mrs. Clinton said she did "not recall this conversation with the same level of detail as Mr. Watkins" and "had no role" in the decision to fire the employees. The First Lady and Watkins had now issued conflicting stories, and Watkins attempted to repair the damage. Perhaps hoping to reassure Mrs. Clinton of his continuing loyalty, he wrote a "Dear Hillary" note to the First Lady, saying that his memo had been misconstrued by the G.A.O. reviewers. "The G.A.O erred in stating that I said you urged me to replace members of the travel office with 'our people.' 'Urge' is not a word I commonly use. Additionally, as I know you have experienced many times, the statement was reported out of context without my complete response to their questions being reported." Watkins said he regretted the attempts to tie Mrs. Clinton in to the travel-office affair, and ended his note with a final declaration of loyalty: "I have always *known* who my 'client' is."

Shortly afterward, Watkins was forced to leave the Clinton circle, after another incident that embarrassed the White House: his use of a Presidential helicopter to check out a country club (he was Clinton's unofficial golf adviser) near the President's retreat at Camp David, Maryland.

Nevertheless, for nine months Watkins maintained his ties with the Clintons. He was paid a consulting fee of three thousand dollars a month by the Clinton-Gore campaign to help settle its financial accounts. In the summer of 1994, Watkins took a job in investor relations with Calloway Golf, and last fall he and his wife returned to Washington, and he is scouting new business acquisitions for a direct-marketing firm there. After his memo became public and Watkins was questioned again, this time by the House Government Reform and Oversight Committee, he again assumed his "protective and vague" posture. The apparent contradictions between his public and private statements annoyed Republican inquisitors and prompted the Whitewater independent counsel, Kenneth W. Starr, to investigate Watkins for possible false statement. Now, therefore, Watkins finds himself in the untenable role of unwilling whistleblower, his credibility squeezed between the interests of the Clintons and the interests of those who would facilitate their undoing. He is, at bottom, an advertising man who tried to please his client, and in doing so he grossly disserved her. A more able manager might have contained the travel-office issue before it heated up into a frenzy; a less self-serving aide would never have written the infamous "soul cleansing" memorandum. Now he is stuck, irretrievably outside the Clinton circle yet subject to criminal punishment for his attempts, however feeble, to demonstrate his loyalty. "I have really got into a lose-lose situation," he says. "I'm looked upon as a guy who, instead of being standup and protective, is a whiner and wrote a cover-your-ass memo. . . . I want it to go away. You can't believe what it costs"—in legal fees. "And this should have been a nothing story."

THE fact of Travelgate's relative triviality, made large in the hothouse of partisan Washington, lay at the core of Vince Foster's despair. He even told his wife, Lisa, that he meant to resign over the issue, though the thought of returning to Arkansas in disgrace deeply offended his high sense of honor. On the last weekend of his life, he took a short vacation with Lisa to Maryland's Eastern Shore, where they ran into Webster Hubbell, Foster's best friend. Hubbell thought that the outing did Foster some good—that he'd actually managed to get his mind off Travelgate—but one of the first things he did when he and Lisa got home on Sunday night, July 18th, was to telephone the Denver attorney Jim Lyons, whose assistance Foster had urgently sought for the congressional investigation that he was certain would come. They talked about the travel office for half an hour.

Many people have found it difficult to believe that something as banal as the White House travel office could have played the central role in the high drama of a top aide's suicide. The event itself came to be referred to as a "scandal," in quotes, to denote its lesser importance beside the Clinton controversy of tangled finance and a long-ago land investment called Whitewater. But Foster himself had been quite clear on the subject, repeatedly expressing his distress over Travelgate to his family and friends, and, most pointedly, in his famous "suicide note." "I made mistakes from ignorance, inexperience and overwork," he wrote. "I did not knowingly violate any law or standard of conduct. No one in the White House, to my knowledge, violated any law or standard of conduct, including any action in the travel office. There was no intent to benefit any individual or specific group. The press is covering up the illegal benefits they received from the travel staff."

The particular investigation by the House Judiciary Committee that was so worrying Foster in the last days of his life never took place; it was killed by the Democratic majority that then ruled Congress. But Foster knew that in the feral culture of politics the issue would not go away, and he said so to Hubbell. It turned out, of course, that Foster was right. There would be investigations, and the hounding would never end. On July 20, 1993, after eating lunch at his desk, Foster slung his suit jacket over his shoulder, got into his car in the White House parking lot, and drove to Fort Marcy Park. ♦

"Ralph has his own little microbrewery."

LIFE AND LETTERS

REBECCA WEST'S WAR

Why has the sprawling, romantic, moralizing, pro-Serb, eleven-hundred-page tome that Rebecca West wrote more than fifty years ago become the key reference for the new generation of Balkan commentators?

BY BRIAN HALL

DURING the Blitz of 1940-41, when Hitler had conquered Europe, and each night might bring a German bomb tearing through her London flat, Rebecca West was struggling to finish her masterpiece, "Black Lamb and Grey Falcon," a book as long as the Old Testament. Although the subject, Yugoslavia, was not capricious, West worried that many readers would think so. In the Epilogue, itself as long as a novella, she wrote, "I resolved to put on paper what a typical Englishwoman felt and thought in the late nineteen-thirties when, already convinced of the inevitability of the second Anglo-German war, she had been able to follow the dark waters of that event back to its source."

West believed that the source lay in Yugoslavia, and not just because the first Anglo-German war had begun there. The horrors of the twentieth century—the mass slaughter of the Great War, modern urban rootlessness and squalor, terrorism, the rise of Fascism and Nazism—had convinced her that all human beings, the good and the bad, had a lust for death. Evil wanted to kill, and good wanted to be killed. How else was one to explain Munich, or the insane unpreparedness of England and France in 1939? The pacifists in West's own Socialist circle during the First World War had enraged her, because they seemed to prefer the cheap moral purity of inaction to the ambiguity of engagement. "The left-wing people among whom I had lived all my life had in their attitude to foreign politics achieved . . . a betrayal. They were always right, they never imposed their rightness." West herself was a determined interventionist, and when the same easy pacifist posturing returned in the thirties she bitterly paraphrased that attitude as " 'I would rather not fight, fighting is horrible.' They say it with an imbecile priggishness, as if everybody did not know that war is an obscenity." In the years leading up to the Second World War, there could be no moral issue that was more important, and West was determined not just to enter the debate but, with a massive broadside, to end it.

West believed she had found a perfect metaphor for this desire of the good to be innocently dead rather than ambiguously alive. In the fourteenth century, in a battle on Kosovo Field, in southern Serbia, the Serbs lost to the Turks and brought on five hundred years of serfdom. "So it had been at Kossovo, and so it was in England," she wrote in her Epilogue. "We were in the power of the abominable fantasy which pretends that bloodshed is peculiarly pleasing to God. . . . We, like the Slavs of Kossovo, had come to a stage when that fantasy becomes a compulsion to suicide."

It had taken her three trips to Yugoslavia, five years, and eleven hundred pages to get to this complex, anguished point. In the early thirties, she admitted in the Prologue to "Black Lamb," "I quite simply and flatly knew nothing at all about the south-eastern corner of Europe." But when she first visited Yugoslavia, in 1936, she experienced what amounted to a religious revelation. "This train was taking us to a land where everything was comprehensible," she wrote on a return trip the following year. (Her third visit was in 1938.) Going to Yugoslavia, she felt, had been "like picking up a strand of wool that would lead me out of a labyrinth in which, to my surprise, I had found myself immured."

In "Black Lamb and Grey Falcon" West all but buries the frail framework of her travel account—her longest visit to Yugoslavia lasted less than two months—under extended meditations on the nature of empire, the value of nationalism, the relationship between the sexes and how it bears on human aggression and survival, the nature of heroism, the nature of Evil, predestination, original sin, Roman Catholicism, Orthodoxy, the doctrine of atonement, St. Augustine, Manichaeanism, good art, bad art, the vital importance of art, and, for that matter, the vital importance of all kinds of things that many readers had previously thought were trivial, like embroidery and well-roasted pig and the fact that the average German of 1937 was pear-shaped and pasty-faced.

Despite West's misgivings, the book was critically praised, and it even sold fairly well. Complaints came mainly from reviewers of Yugoslav background, who thought that her portrait of their country was inaccurate, but these objections, even if true, were to a certain extent irrelevant. The real importance of the book, in 1941, lay in the call to action that it directed at England and, by implication, America. The Epilogue is one of the most stirring and intelligent pieces of straight-ahead war propaganda ever written. (West said years later that England's Ministry of Information had asked her to write it.)

After the war, "Black Lamb and Grey Falcon" gradually became legendary, which is to say that everyone had heard of it but few had read it, and it dwelled in the twilight reserved for those works—"Travels in Arabia Deserta," "A Glastonbury Romance"—that were too deeply respected by a few formidable critics to be forgotten, too long to be read voluntarily, and too odd to be assigned to college students.

Then came 1991 and the war in Croatia, and then the war in Bosnia, and suddenly the moral argument that West had fashioned for fighting evil aggression, using Yugoslavia more or less as a springboard, gained new urgency—but now the debate was specifically *about* Yugoslavia. Once more, there arose in the West the

REBECCA WEST COLLECTION, UNIVERSITY OF TULSA/PETERS, FRASER & DUNLOP GROUP LTD.

Rebecca West in Yugoslavia in the thirties. The world's perception of today's tragedy has been deeply colored by a book that one of her friends characterized as "not so much a book about Yugoslavia as a book about Rebecca West."

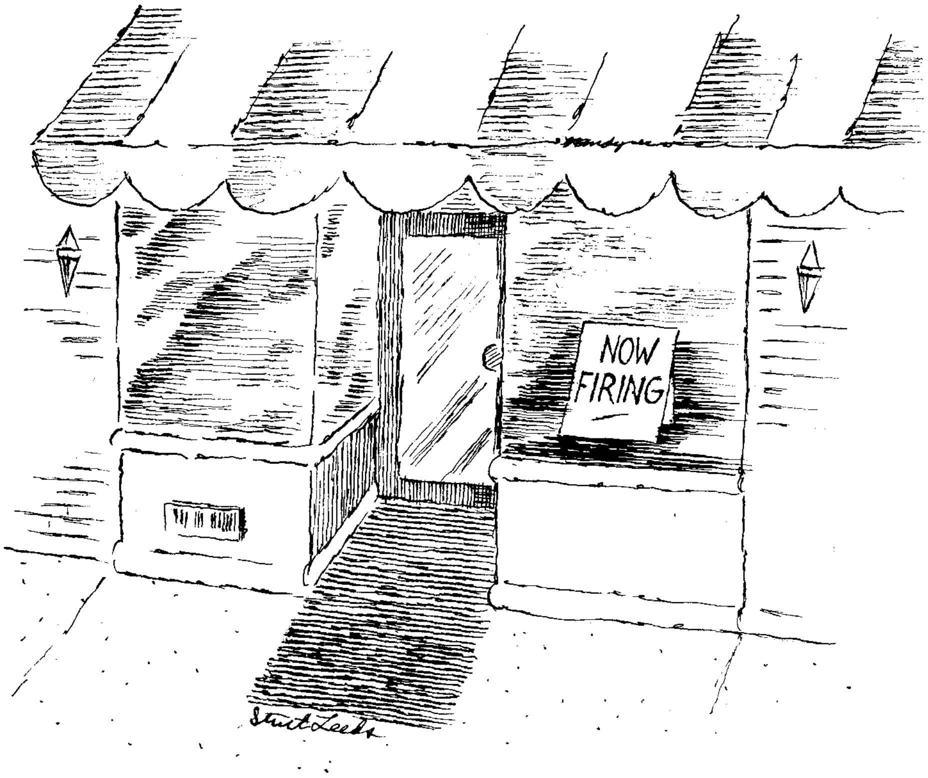
seductive argument that any action we might take in Bosnia was bound to be morally questionable, that surely it was better to keep our hands clean by keeping them in our pockets. Once more, we decided, like West's despised English pacifists, that we did not, after all, want to save the world. We preferred to go to Heaven.

So West's magnum opus is selling well again—some twenty-one thousand copies in this country alone in the last three years. And now, far more than in 1941, the accuracy of West's portrait of Yugoslavia is important. For English and American journalists who write about the region, the book dominates all other secondary sources. Each of us has a favorite passage—some complex insight on page 500 or page 800 that West framed so well it seems pointless ever to argue about it again. At least three of the current crop of books on the Yugoslav wars draw on West for their epigraphs. (I narrowly missed doing so, too, in a book of my own, but made up for it with a couple of lengthy genuflections farther in.)

If we journalists have been influenced by West, the public and the politicians have been influenced by us, even if not nearly as much as we might have desired. Consequently, thousands of people's impressions of today's Yugoslav tragedy have been colored by a book that West's friend and fellow-journalist John Gunther plausibly characterized as "not so much a book about Yugoslavia as a book about Rebecca West."

HER real name was Cicely Isabel Fairfield. The third of three sisters, she was born in London in 1892, into a family whose straitened material circumstances seemed jarringly at odds with its wide reading and culture. Both parents could look back on a better time and place. Cicely's mother, a Scot named Isabella Mackenzie, had grown up in Edinburgh, on Heriot Row, an exalted address; and her father, Charles Fairfield, who was Anglo-Irish, regaled his daughters with romantic stories (of uncertain veracity) about the Fairfields when they formed part of the landed Protestant class of Ireland's County Kerry. Victoria Glendinning, in her 1987 biography of West, convincingly argues that this combination of the family's august past and its humiliating present had two effects: it engendered in the Fairfield girls an early sense of a lost paradise (two paradises, in fact), and it encouraged a comforting belief in the importance of bloodlines.

The calamity of Cicely's childhood was the departure of her father, when she was eight. Charles Fairfield was a gifted journalist and a brilliant talker; he was also unfaithful, improvident, and erratic. As Carl Rollyson has noted, in a fuller biography, recently published in England, the reasons he left remain something of a mystery. It was said when he moved out that he was going to Africa to make a fortune, but when he returned to England after his venture failed he settled in Liverpool. He died in a lodging house there five years later, poor and alone. Charles Fairfield's abandonment left Cissie (as she was called) feeling guilty and unlovable—against all logic, she blamed herself—and it must have contributed to her intense, lifelong ambivalence toward men. In her explicit pronouncements, she could be comically vituperative, as in this 1964 letter to the historian A. J. P. Taylor: "Any member of the male sex who tries to take any part in politics ought immediately to be subjected to both castration and lobotomy, a surgeon working at each simultaneously, in order to get the job done as quickly as possible." (West's private papers are housed principally at the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, at Yale, and at the McFarlin Library, at the University of Tulsa.) In her view, men were both dangerous and fragile. They were congenitally flawed "lunatics," as she defined the term in "Black Lamb and Grey Falcon": "They are so obsessed by public affairs that they see the world as by moonlight, which shows the outlines of every object but not the details indicative of their nature." But there was an ideal of manhood—virile, protective, tall—that she pined after, perhaps particularly so because actual men failed so consistently to measure up.



Cissie wanted to become an actress. When she couldn't make more than a modest success of that, she turned to writing political essays (her father's profession). She was a Socialist and a suffragist (her father had been anti-Socialist and anti-suffragist). In 1912, in her second published essay, for *The Freewoman*, she took as her nom de plume Rebecca West, the heroine of an Ibsen play, "Rosmersholm," who steals the affections of a father figure, turns him into a leftist, and joins him in a double suicide. Even at the age of nineteen, West had a writing style that combined an Olympian confidence and breadth of vision with a wit so frankly impudent that it was winning. In a characteristic opening sentence she declared, "Writers on the subject of August Strindberg have hitherto omitted to mention that he could not write." The absolutist tone was not a pose: like her father (and like an actor), she could honestly believe her own inventions, and the form this talent took in her writing was a polemical impregnability and an intimidating tone. One can pluck examples at random. "There

THE FRUIT BAT

Because the air has darkened
like bruised fruit, you creep
down the bare branch

where you slept all light long,
gathered into yourself like a fig.
Little mandarin woman fleeing

under the stars on bound feet,
when your wings spring open
even you look surprised.

What are the raven's slick feathers
beside these pewter sails
raised in the foundry of your flesh,

burnished by light poured
from a wasted moon and a dipper
brimming with darkness?

—Nancy Willard

is a phase of ancient history which ought never to be forgotten by those who wish to understand their fellow-men," she wrote in her forties, before introducing her readers to a fourth-century bunch of Christian schismatics called the Donatists. And from her eighties comes one of my favorites: "Surely, the dahlia is of all flowers (except perhaps the pelargonium) the least suitable for association with dead Druids." Surely.

In her early articles she delighted in shooting down the important men of her day, and her victims tended to be titillated. One of them, in 1912, was H. G. Wells, perhaps the most famous author in the world and a notorious advocate of free love, about whom this teen-age unknown wrote, "Of course, he is the old maid among novelists; even the sex obsession that lay clotted on *Ann Veronica* and *The New Machiavelli* like cold white sauce was merely old maids' mania, the reaction towards the flesh of a mind too long absorbed in airships and colloids." Wells invited this impertinent young thing to lunch, and was struck by her "dark, expressive, troubled eyes" and "big soft mouth." After some hesitation on Wells's part—he seems to have feared she would attach more importance to their affair than he—they became lovers.

It was a turbulent relationship. West had a tendency toward self-dramatization, and she made scenes that revolted the hyperrational Wells. During the First World War, they endured a German bombing raid together, and Wells later wrote her, in a scathing letter, that she kept up "loud and exasperating cries of 'Oh *God* oh *God!*' For which I detested you." He concluded, "It is your nature to darken your world & blacken every memory. So long as I love you you will darken mine." Years after the affair ended, Wells captured her in a phrase: "She had a splendid *disturbed* brain."

The Great War was a difficult time for West. Early in the affair, she unintentionally became pregnant, and a son, Anthony West, was born on August 5, 1914, minutes after England declared war on Germany. Free love or no, unwed mothers were a disgrace, and West now felt triply outcast—from the paradise of family legend, from a happy childhood, and from respectable society. This private trauma probably sharpened for her the public one of the war itself. She wrote a series of articles for the *Daily Chronicle* called "Hands That War," which were paeans to the young women working in munitions factories—a labor that she hoped could "be expressed in terms of the saving of English and the losing of German life." She had been outraged by the accounts of atrocities in Belgium, but other causes were rooted deeper in her character. Years later, Anthony West wrote in "H.G. Wells: Aspects of a Life," "My mother . . . held an image of herself in her mind as a bonneted, claymore-wielding highland laddie who would stand his ground giving blow for blow in no matter how tight a corner." Her glorying in defiance was bound up with her feminism. In 1913, she had inveighed in an article in *The Clarion* against the "sin of self-sacrifice," whereby a woman consented to be sequestered in the home, without intellectual stimulus, so that "the tranquil flame of her unspoiled soul should radiate purity and nobility upon an indefinitely extended family." All her life, West fought the age-old sexist attitude that yoked virtue with passivity. England for her was the heroic girls working twelve-hour shifts in the cordite factories, and Germany seemed archetypally the lunatic male—aggressive and militaristic, seeing the outlines of power but not the details of life.

Intimately betrayed at an early age, West grew up with an inchoate sense of grievance, and tended to focus it on convenient targets. She was a champion hater. Perhaps hating was also a family disease. Her son devised an epigraph for his autobiographical novel, "Heritage," that suggested as much: "These are long vendettas, a peculiar people, neither forgivers nor forgetters. . . ." Rebecca West never forgave the Germans. After Hitler came to power, she wrote to her sister Winnie, "If only we had put every man woman and child of that abominable nation to the sword in 1919." She decried "the insane mercy and charity of the Treaty of Versailles"—a document that many historians fault for its vindictiveness toward Germany—and added, "I hope you realize . . . the Huns will go down into Austria, and civilization will be over."

In a sense, civilization was already over. The prewar world of rational ameliorism, of no-nonsense Socialists like West who were "primarily concerned that life should be beautiful," was gone, another lost paradise. In its place was a frightening theatre of blasted ideologies and mass movements that seemed to have no ideal other than violence. West's writing turned inward, to fiction, and in 1927 she underwent psychoanalysis. It was perhaps then that she became enamored of the Freudian theory of Eros and Thanatos, the idea that human beings carry within them the desire both to live and to die. Through the nineteen-thirties, West's search for solace focussed increasingly on the study of fundamental questions of faith. She began work on a biography of St. Augustine, whom she had first read as a teenager, and disparate pieces of her thinking started to fall into place: "Every phrase I read of his sounds in my ears like the sentence of my doom and the doom of my age." About Augustine's youthful flirtation with Manichaeanism—the doctrine that the universe is a battleground between equal, contending forces of Light (spirit) and Darkness (matter)—West wrote, "It is a beautiful myth, and how nearly it corresponds to a basic fantasy of the human mind is shown by its tendency to reappear spontaneously in age after age." More specifically, it corresponded to a basic fantasy in West's mind and, from 1933 on, began to reappear in work after work. It appealed to her moral absolutism, and to her sense of life as a vivid drama in which she, the beleaguered heroine, was fighting for Right. It also justified her tendency (which others saw as silly and self-indulgent) to suddenly attach great importance to trivial things, to have frequent epiphanies: she was glimpsing a shard of Light, embedded like a diamond in the miserable coal of twentieth-century existence.

West transformed Augustine's Manichaeanism into a half-psychological, half-mystical credo of her own. The forces of Light were all the things that made life pleasant: the Freudian Eros. This emphatically included bodily pleasures and material goods. A reader of any of West's work will immediately be struck by how often and lovingly she details the clothes, furniture, and objets d'art of her surroundings. She had grown up in a cultured household humiliatingly lacking in the material trappings of culture, and her credo gave her a philosophical basis for what was probably a more visceral need. West's Darkness was Thanatos, the death instinct, and so man's original sin was not disobedience but cruelty, his depraved preference for the disagreeable over the agreeable.

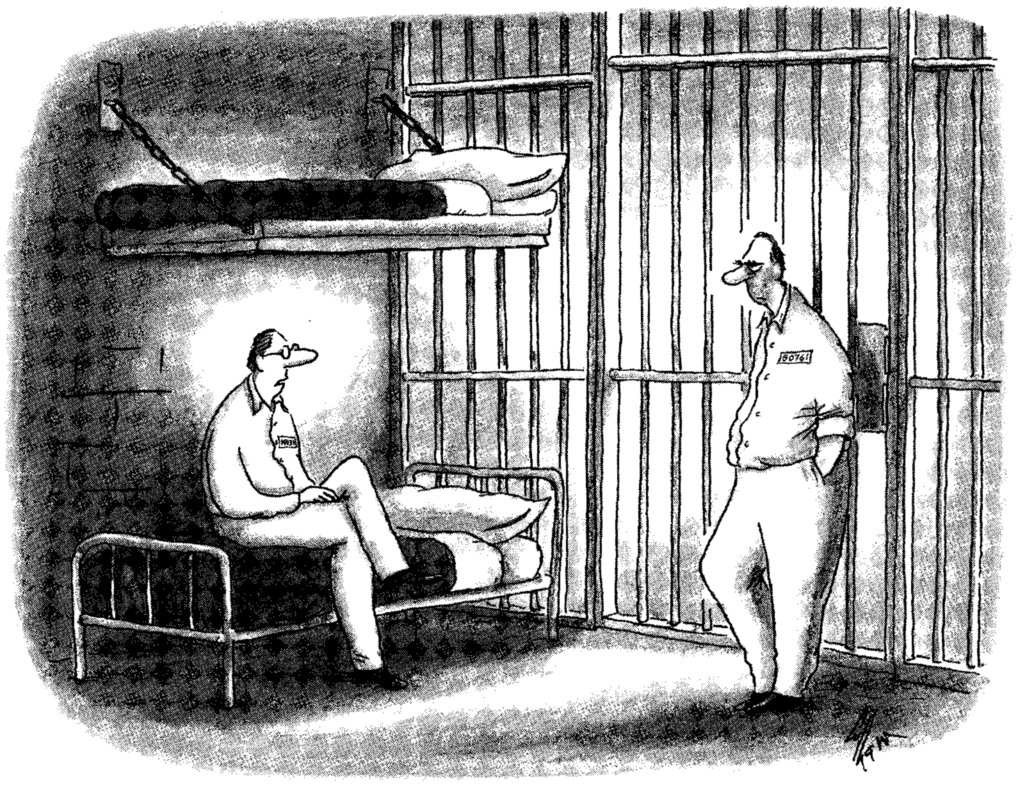
If the human soul was depraved, then what was the saving grace? For West—who must have sensed that she would never find an "answer" to the conundrum of human cruelty and misery—grace became the struggle itself, the heroically questing mind. She liked to quote the famous dictum of Pascal: "Man is but a reed, the most feeble thing in nature; but he is a thinking reed. . . . If the universe were to crush him, man would still be more noble than that which killed him, because he knows that he dies and the advantage which the universe has over him; the universe knows nothing of this."

When the British Council sent West on a good-will lecture tour through the Baltic and Scandinavian countries, in 1935, she was much struck by the Finns' struggle to establish their nationhood. In her report to the Council she wrote, "The important thing in Finland is to get hold of the people young. There is no real tie of necessity and none of propinquity to bind them to England, it can only be done by creating an atmosphere, and Germany is working all the time to gain a cultural dominance in the country." The Manichaean in West was enthralled: here was a small nation, like a beset soul, caught between the powers of Light and Darkness. She came home resolved to write a book about Finland's "struggle for independence."

Then, in the spring of 1936, the Council sent her on another lecture tour, this time to Yugoslavia.

YEARS later, West wrote, "I had an extraordinary rapture when I was travelling in Yugoslavia sometimes—to come on utter strangers and have it suddenly revealed that they were part of a pattern was like being dead and arriving near total comprehension." Some people might doubt the objective worth of their impressions while such a rapture was on them, but West believed she was clairvoyant. (During a 1920 illness, she had passed into a delirium, and was convinced ever afterward that she had second sight.) She decided to drop Finland and write a book about this new enthusiasm, since it was a "more picturesque and convenient example of the political thesis I wanted to expound."

"Black Lamb and Grey Falcon" had to be huge: it was the culmination of all West's thinking since the First World War. She had been writing in many genres—social polemic, literary criticism, philosophical essay, fiction, biography, travel narrative—but these were masks, behind which her concerns were remarkably consistent. Her entire œuvre can be read as one vast *essai* (she revered Montaigne), for which she wrote draft after draft, and in which, instead of replacing one draft with the next, she lined



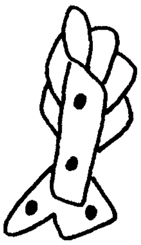
"I've always hated hospitals, dentists' offices, and jails."

them up end to end. "Black Lamb and Grey Falcon" is best considered as a work that she began writing twenty years before she set foot in Yugoslavia.

West's lifelong fascination with treachery had a curious counterpoint in her talent for self-betrayal, and in the Prologue to "Black Lamb" she mocks "English persons . . . of humanitarian and reformist disposition" who went to the Balkans and returned "with a pet Balkan people established in their hearts as suffering and innocent, eternally the massacree and never the massacrer." There could be no better description of her own infatuation with the Serbs.

The etiology of this infatuation is complicated. Over the years, West had come to see nationalism as a bulwark against chaos. A man's own country "can help him to live as no other can, because it can give him a tradition which is appropriate to him, which springs from the experience of men of his own blood contending with the same environment," she had written in 1934, in "The Necessity and Grandeur of the International Ideal." (This was perhaps a predictable statement from someone who had believed since childhood in the importance of bloodlines. The nation was the family writ large, and the fact that West thought she had never been properly protected or nurtured by her family made her all the more conscious that protecting and nurturing were what families, and nations, were supposed to do.) She feared the new class of urban proletarians, because they "have been defrauded of their racial tradition, they enjoyed no inheritance of wisdom." These, she felt, were the people who had nowhere to turn for solace or protection but to a Mussolini or a Hitler. England, meanwhile, was acting like a family that the male head had deserted. By refusing to arm, it was being an "idiot"—from the Greek for "private person"—and in West's scheme female "idiocy" was the counterpart of male "lunacy." In June, 1936, she addressed an open letter to the Peace Pledge Union, in which, enraged, she recognized the old "female" identification of virtue with passivity: "Do you believe that you are going to abolish Cancer if you get 100,000 people to sign a pledge that they do not intend to have Cancer?"

Sometimes, for the sake of old Socialist internationalism, she tried to argue that all nations were equal, asserting that each nation "must take pride in itself." An Englishman must, of course, be proud of England, yet "our crop of great figures seems spare and monotonous, lacking a Pascal or a Napoleon, a Goethe or a Mazzini." But she had tipped her hand. In fact, she despised Goethe, writing elsewhere that his "philosophy, indeed, boils down to the opinion, 'Ain't Nature grand?' " All her attempts at nationalist tolerance broke on the rocks of her hatred for the Germans. They were Darkness, a cancer. The Germans in "Black Lamb and Grey Falcon" are crude caricatures, uniformly stupid, swinish, and arrogant. The *porco di tutti porci* is Gerda, the German wife of Constantine, who was West's guide and translator; indeed, Gerda is so oppressive she almost sinks the book. Gerda is used as a symbol for all Germany, even though West knew that the real woman on whom Gerda was based was mentally unbalanced.



Once you allow yourself to believe that some nations are inherently better than others, rank egoism can take over. Like many travellers to the Balkans, West was enthralled by the intensity of the life—the strong drink, the piquant food, the late hours, the vibrant folk costumes—and she saw in it an echo of her own materialist passion: "These people hold that the way to make life better is to add good things to it, whereas in the West we hold that the way to make life better is to take bad things away from it." After hearing three people talking in a square in the Dalmatian city of Split, she decided that Slavs were natural Manichaeans: "See how they are pretending that behind them, had one but the proper eyesight, could be seen the wings of the hierarchy of angels and the throne itself, and that behind the man they are despising is primeval ooze and chaos." The intellectuals she met were exuberant masticators of culture, mixing literary allusions from a huge range, and making sweeping aesthetic statements with impossible confidence. "These people are profoundly different from us," she has her husband—the banker Henry Andrews, whom she married in 1930—say in "Black Lamb." Maybe they were profoundly different from him and most other Englishmen, but they were exactly like Rebecca West. This was her lost paradise—somehow, mysteriously, the land of her people. "These are long vendettas, a peculiar people, neither forgivers nor forgetters. . . ." Later, she actually claimed that on her father's side there was a Slav ancestor to account for the resemblance: "His genes must have been powerful."

She became convinced, too, that Slavs had an "infinite capacity for inquiry and speculation." That is, they were thinking reeds par excellence. (As opposed to the Germans, whose greatest thinker could go no farther than "Ain't Nature grand?") In one of several epiphanies in "Black Lamb," West meets an old Montenegrin woman on a mountain road. The woman says that she has had a dreadful life, losing all her loved ones to disease and war. She describes her life with deep pain, but without whining, and ends, "If I had to live, why should my life have been like this? If I walk about up here where it is very high and grand it seems to me I am nearer to understanding it." She wanders off, leaving West thunderstruck: "If during the next million generations there is but one human being born in every generation who will not cease to inquire into the nature of his fate, even while it strips and bludgeons him, some day we shall read the riddle of our universe. . . . We shall put our own madness in irons." This, then, was how you attained the saving grace of the theologians—not as a gift from God but as a prize you wrested from Him by holding Him down like a good Highland laddie: "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." (And then castration and a lobotomy? One wonders.)

It was not insignificant that West found Yugoslav men beautiful. With her belief in Good and Evil as immanent powers, she thought, almost medievally, that she could actually *see* them in people, like marks of Abel and Cain. If fine furniture served the Light, then how much more did handsome people? Germans are hideous not only in her books—where one might think her descriptions of them some crude rhetorical device—but in her private papers as well. "Oh, those beastly people with fish eyes and lumps on the backs of their necks, and their beastly language," she wrote in one letter. "They've covered the world with horror." Three Dalmatian shipbuilders, on the other hand, were "beautiful, with thick, straight, fair hair and bronze skins and high cheekbones pulling the flesh up from their large mouths, with broad chests and long legs springing from arched feet. These were men, they could beget children on women, they could shape certain kinds of materials for purposes that made them masters of their worlds."

This is silly stuff, but it's also poignant. Although West was travelling with her husband, Andrews had pretty much stopped sleeping with her, giving no explanation. This and a couple of previous incidents with other men, had led her to wonder if her stereotypically masculine traits made men impotent. A letter West wrote from Macedonia to a friend shows how much this private grief influenced her political theories: "The cold truth about me is that I would have paid any price for love, and I had the money in my hand, and nobody would take it. . . . I can't help feeling that the thing that made men unable to love, has made them split up into maniacs and idiots, as the Nazis and as us in England. There's a turning away from life that first turned men away from love, and now is turning them away from all the forms of civilisation."

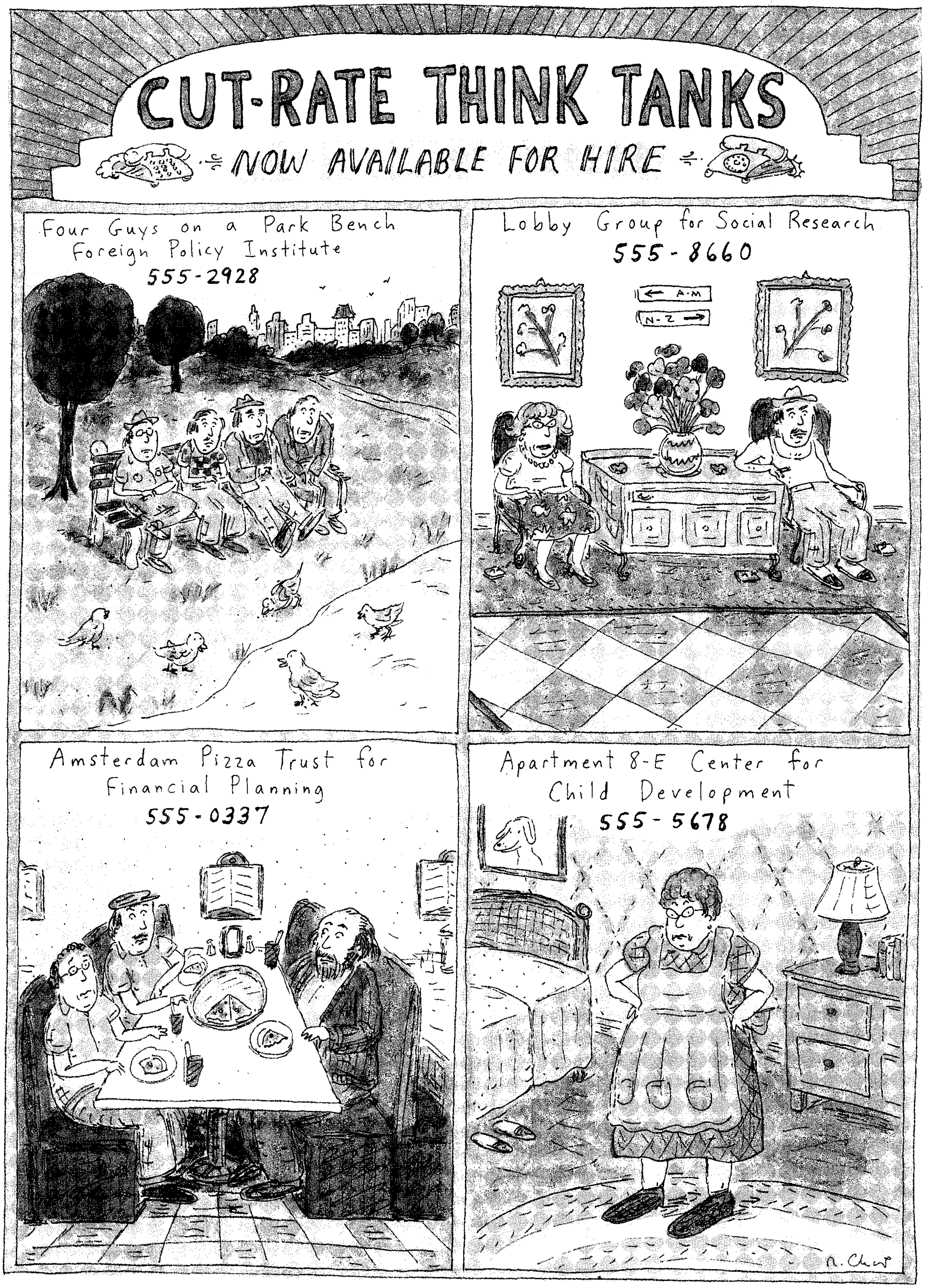
But physical beauty, speculative ability, Manichaeanism, long memories—these are characteristics that West found common to all Yugoslavs. It was other issues that, as she saw it, raised the Serbs far above the Croats and the Bosnian Muslims. On the simplest and deepest level, it was a question of purity. Serbs, Croats, and Bosnian Muslims all descended from basically the same Slavic stock, but the Croats, after centuries under Hapsburg domination, had become tainted: "Something alien and murderous had intruded here into the Slav pattern, and its virtue had gone out of it. . . . The German influence was like a shadow on the Croat World." Although West's typical argument was that each nation should have its own state, in order to cultivate its "soul," she never applied that argument to the Croats. Partly, she believed that only together could the Serbs and the Croats be strong enough to fend off German, Italian, and Bulgarian aggression. Partly, she seemed never able to resolve in her own mind whether the Croats were really a separate nation or just a cheap, out-of-focus copy of the Serbs. And, partly, she thought the Croats should be grateful to the Serbs for having acted for centuries as a buffer between them and the Turks, and so should accept their lumps in Yugoslavia—which she knew quite well included the assassination of their politicians in the streets by Serb agents and the torture of their dissidents in prison by Serb police—as the working off of a debt.

The Bosnian Muslims were out-and-out renegades. While their brother Serbs guarded the holy flame of their national soul (the way a man should protect his home), the Muslims were the Judases, accepting the faith of their Turkish masters for base material gain. Yet West didn't hate them for this as much as might be expected, given her preoccupation with betrayal. She knew little about Islam but considered it so antithetical to Europe that a population of Islamicized Europeans struck her as mainly a curiosity. She marvelled at snow on mosque roofs and at blue eyes under fezzes as though they were contraventions of natural laws. But she was clear about the importance of keeping these people exotic: "I do not mind there being such men and women, but one sees them with a different eye when they are in a majority and could put at a disadvantage all those not of their kind." Behind them stood the Turks, and the Turks, West believed, were even less speculative than the Germans, because they "had no word in their language to express the idea of being interested in anything." (Which, by the way, is nonsense.) The Turks, like the Germans, were on the side of Darkness, and the Serbs, hated by both the Germans and the Turks, were doubly haloed.

There were also more complex reasons for the superiority of the Serbs. Since West held a mystical view of art as an intimation of transcendent harmony, and a romantic nationalist view of it as the key to a people's soul, it is impossible to exaggerate how important the art and architecture of the Serbs' medieval monasteries were to her. She believed that Byzantine art, of which the Serbs' was an offshoot, was tragic and speculative, whereas Renaissance art, because of its literalness, its naturalism, pretended that all was known, and was therefore "fake art." In other words, we're back at the thinking reed. In an extraordinary passage in "Black Lamb," West and some other tourists are in the treasury of the Cathedral of Dubrovnik, and a priest, behind a balustrade, is showing them a famous Renaissance basin and ewer, covered with realistic enamelled plants and animals that are designed to jiggle in a lifelike manner when the basin is touched. "Nothing could be more offensive to the eye, to the touch, or to common sense," she writes. The fat, foolish Swiss tourists (not French Swiss, we may presume) are delighted, but when the priest leans over to show it to West she turns pale and almost faints. His large stomach is jamming her hand down onto a spike on the iron balustrade. She finally retrieves it, the palm bleeding freely. That's right—for her aesthetic martyrdom, she has received a stigma.

West also preferred the Orthodoxy of the Serbs to the Catholicism of the Croats. (She viewed the two religions as irreconcilable.) She looked on the Orthodox Mass as a "masterpiece" of art, far more magical than the Catholic, and its magical quality appealed to her because of the value she placed on mystical knowledge: "The congregation . . . were allowing themselves to become drunken with exaltation in order that they should receive more knowledge than they could learn by reason; and the Church which was dispensing this supernatural knowledge was not falling into the damnable heresy of pretending that this knowledge is final, that all is now known."

But, more than anything else, what endeared the Serbs to West was the narrative sweep of their history. Since she never learned much Serbo-Croatian and mostly confined her personal contacts to a handful of intellectuals in each town, she was hostage to her enormous reading. Unfortunately, there were not many books on Croats, and virtually none on the Bosnian Muslims, for her to turn to, whereas the Serbs had been exporting a compelling narrative to Europe since the late eighteenth century, when the Italian traveller and scholar Alberto Fortis published a Serbo-Croatian folk ballad, "The Wife of Asan-aga," in his "Travels Into Dalmatia," and all Europe swooned. Romantic nationalism was then just beginning, and folk poetry was considered a pure ray straight from the soul of the na-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R. Chast

tion. But the Serb ballads were not merely folk poetry: many of them were splendidly Homeric in scope and form, and they were still being composed by blind balladeers, and a great many of them were about killing Turks. Since virtually the entire European continent was intensely Turkophobic in the nineteenth century, the Serbs benefitted immeasurably from the perception that they had suffered under these beasts without relinquishing their good Slav souls, and would perhaps one day push all the Mohammedan fanatics east of the Bosporus. And that's what the Serbs nearly did, in bloody revolts in 1804 and 1815, and in a crushing military victory in 1912, leaving only an island of those horrid "Turks"—the Bosnian Muslims—stranded. Serb nationalist rhetoric never hid the fact that this was the next problem to be "solved." The Bosnian Muslims were to be converted back to Christianity or ousted.

West was aware that nationalism could turn ugly, as it had in Germany. She tried to get around this by distinguishing two kinds of nationalism: a defensive form, which she considered "true" nationalism, and an aggressive one, which she said was not really nationalism but imperialism. Serb nationalism, as she saw it, had always been defensive—against the Turks, against the Austrians, against the Bulgarians.

Augustine's conversion epiphany had been a child's voice calling, "Take up and read!" West took up and read, and was converted. And with hindsight it can be said that what she read was the scattered scrolls, the fragments, the apocrypha, and what she wrote was the canon. No one—not even a Serb—has written more stirringly about the Serbs. A twelve-page set piece on Serb glory begins, "There has been no fighting in our time that has had the romantic quality of the Balkan wars that broke out in 1912. The Serbians rode southwards radiant as lovers." She then runs through the second Balkan War ("But the Serbians, knifed in the back, continued within their dream, to achieve their poem"), the beginning of the First World War ("By such means Serbia was trapped, and the whole of Europe was doomed"), the first invasion of Serbia by the Austrian Army ("The Serbian army turned on its tracks, and, to the world's amazement, sprang at the Austrians' throats and drove them out of the country in less than a month"), the second invasion of Serbia ("They forgot the usual prudent opinion that dying is disagreeable, and valued death and life and honour as if they were heroes who had died a thousand years before or gods who were under no necessity to die"), the third invasion of Serbia ("It was now necessary for the country to die"), the punishing retreat of the Serbian Army through the Albanian mountains to the sea ("Monks came out of the monasteries and followed the soldiers, carrying on bullock-carts, and on their shoulders where the roads were too bad, the coffined bodies of the medieval Serbian kings, the sacred Nemanyas, which must not be defiled"), the Death ("On Corfu the Serbian Army fell down and slept"), the Resurrection ("[They] stirred as soon as the spring warmed them, stretched, and looked up into the sunshine, and were again golden and young and victorious"), and the Ascension: "The poem was now written. In the autumn of 1918 the Serbian armies, as the spearhead of the Allied forces, drove into the enemy forces and scattered the Bulgars back to Bulgaria, the Austrians and Germans back to a land which was no land."

Finally, West loved the Serbs because writers love their symbols, and Serbian history provided her with the core argument of her book and with its title. On a bloody, reeking rock in Macedonia she saw a black lamb's throat being cut in a folk-Christian fertility rite, and the revulsion she felt rose out of her lifelong hatred of the doctrine of atonement—"this repulsive pretence that pain is the proper price of any good thing." West believed that a misinterpretation stood at the heart of Christianity: Jesus's death on the Cross demonstrated not that the sacrifice of innocence was necessary to bring salvation but merely that mankind was cruel and had a lust for death. The Crucifixion, in other words, was not God's plan but man's folly. As for the gray falcon, it appears in a Serb heroic poem, where it symbolizes man's temptation to sacrifice himself, out of this mistaken belief that the holy duty of the good and the innocent is to die. In the poem, the gray falcon flies to the leader of the Serb Army, Prince Lazar, on the eve of the fateful battle with the Turks on Kosovo Field in 1389. The falcon is a disguised Elijah, who offers Lazar the choice of beating the Turks and gaining a paltry earthly kingdom or being destroyed by them and winning a glorious heavenly one. Lazar chooses to forget about saving the Balkans, and goes to Heaven instead. West caustically noted, "So that was what happened, Lazar was a member of the Peace Pledge Union. . . . He saved his soul and there followed five hundred years when no man on these plains, nor anywhere else in Europe for hundreds of miles in any direction, was allowed to keep his soul. . . . The black lamb and the grey falcon had worked together here."

NOBODY has understood the Serbs better than West, in the sense that she understood their understanding of themselves. What she would have thought of the recent Bosnian carnage is hard to say. She wouldn't necessarily have believed that the Serbs' nationalism had turned from the good, defensive kind into the bad, aggressive kind, since she thought of the Bosnian Muslims as Serbs anyway. Perhaps she would have shared the view of some Bosnian Serbs that they were refusing to be the black lamb in Bosnia, and were merely imposing their rightness on their renegade brothers—with extreme brutality, of course, but then West never denied that heroes were brutal. She winced at Homeric bloodletting but saw it as inevitable.

Of the Turks, West implied in "Black Lamb" that, though she might pity them individually, they deserved destruction collectively, because such a thing "must always happen if a national faith is not valid," and she went on to say, "Of course the Turkish faith was not valid. . . . Death must be allowed to carry out the dead, and if a civilization cannot stand it must fall." That civilization, in falling, left the Bosnian Muslims as a sort of walking dead, "buried in their lifetime, coffined in the shell of a perished empire." In an Augustinian sense, they were the damned, while the Serbs were the saved. West could therefore hide from any harshness directed at Muslims by invoking the iron law of predestination.

Attitudes can change a great deal in fifty years, and no journalist today would endorse West's baldly racist views. But her book has exerted influence on a deeper level, and the best way to see that influence is to turn to the book that has sold far more than any other on the re-

INTERNAL
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"Five per cent of my income is from lemonade, and the rest is from charity."

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cent wars—Robert D. Kaplan's "Balkan Ghosts: A Journey Through History" (1993). Kaplan writes, "I would rather have lost my passport and money than my heavily thumbed and annotated copy of 'Black Lamb and Grey Falcon.' "

West's influence on Kaplan could not be clearer. He views the Catholic-Orthodox dichotomy as fundamental, unbridgeable. He lauds Byzantine art at the expense of the Renaissance. He seems to look on Turkish rule simply as Darkness, and praises West's "breathtaking psychoanalysis of the German mind." He is an arch-romantic. He believes in national essences. He has epiphanies in which small things, like a fresco, seem to him to illuminate the whole history of a people. He talks about "the Story" of the Croats, and confidently centers this Story on the career of a single man.

Kaplan is a fine, vivid writer, and he loves narrative, and his narrative is compelling. But essentialist narratives, with an emphasis on "story," tend to be fatalistic. Nations, trapped in their unchanging personalities, must act as they have always acted. Unpredictable outcomes, unfathomable changes in direction are inimical to the pleasing sense that we understand where a nation came from and where it is going. "I developed an obsession with medieval churches and monasteries, with old books and old photographs," Kaplan writes. "I knew that the books that best explained the violence of Romania's December 1989 revolution had been out of print for decades, in some cases for half a century or more." This is a self-fulfilling exercise. Having prepped by so devotedly reading books, Kaplan sees what he has been prepared to see, and he concludes that little changes in the Balkans, because he is seeing the same things he read about in fifty-year-old books. It is a deeply attractive approach, for both writer and reader, because it makes sense. We all want history to make sense. Rebecca West's British editor, Lovat Dickson, recalled how fascinated he had been on first reading "Black Lamb and Grey Falcon": "Who would not be," he commented, "by a book which demonstrated by its argument that the East End of London would not then [in 1941] be lying in ruins if the Balkan Christian powers had not been defeated by the Turks in 1389?"

"Balkan Ghosts" swept away one of its own readers—someone who prides himself on his devotion to books and regards himself as a quick study. According to "On the Edge," Elizabeth Drew's account of the Clinton Administration's first year, the President read Kaplan's book in the spring of 1993, during a protracted debate in his Administration about how, or whether, to implement his repeated proposal to lift the arms embargo on the Bosnian government and threaten the Serbs with air strikes. Hillary Clinton had also read Kaplan's book, and Colin Powell, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, had read part of it. The President was struck by Kaplan's vivid picture of various peoples who had been locked hopelessly in conflict since the fourteenth century. Drew writes that when Les Aspin, the Secretary of Defense, heard his boss talk about the book, he thought, "Holy shit! He's going south on 'lift and strike.' "

Instead, Clinton let the carnage continue, and did his best to disguise American inaction by creating, with the Europeans, mini-reservations for the Muslims, called "safe havens" (although they were not safe), which we promised to defend (although we didn't mean it). This brings me to the passage that, out of Rebecca West's eleven hundred pages on Yugoslavia, is currently my favorite. On a night in June, 1903, a group of Serbian Army officers murdered the Serbian King Alexander Obrenovic and his wife, Draga, gruesomely mutilated their naked bodies, and threw them out their bedroom window. Dawn revealed the disembowelled corpses lying in the royal gardens. According to West, both the Austrian and the Russian governments had known of the plot and had done nothing to stop it. "But there is a point at which a gentleman must draw the line," she wrote. "Entering the garden, the Russian Minister went up to the officers who were standing about and pointed to the corpses. 'For God's sake,' he said, 'carry them into the palace. Do not leave them here in the rain exposed to the gaze of the public.' This sentence may well be preserved as a symbol of the kind and degree in which the great powers have acted as a civilizing influence in the Balkans." It is a double irony that, through an odd chain of influence, "Black Lamb and Grey Falcon" helped insure that this disgraceful legacy would continue. ♦

BOOKS

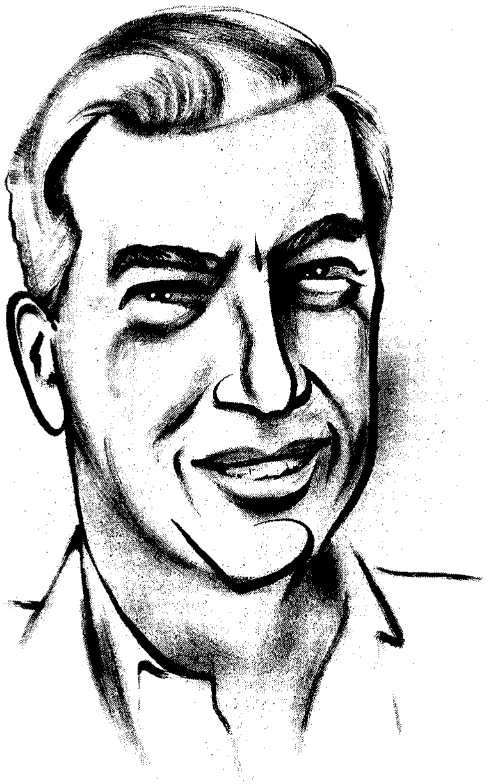
MOUNTAIN MISERIES

Mario Vargas Llosa returns to the novel.

BY JOHN UPDIKE

MARIO VARGAS LLOSA'S new novel, "Death in the Andes" (translated from the Spanish by Edith Grossman; Farrar, Straus & Giroux; $24), is a disappointing book, owing to our elevated expectations. Peru's best novelist—one of the world's best—tackles the heights that Peru is renowned for, and what do we get? We get some cloudy mountain mysticism, and a lot of tough talk. Tough talk has been one of Vargas Llosa's modes ever since his first novel, "The Time of the Hero" (1962 in Spanish; English translation 1966), described life in the Leoncio Prado Military Academy in Lima. The brutalities of machismo encircle the islands of peace and graciousness that women create in this author's sharply gender-conscious sense of the world. His previous book, "A Fish in the Water" (1993; 1994)—a brimful autobiography that alternates chapters on his unsuccessful campaign for the Presidency of Peru, in 1990, with chapters on his early life, up to his departure from Peru for Madrid when he was twenty-two—presents the painful cleavage in his boyhood between the Llosas, his mother's large, warm, animated, aristocratic family, and his father, Ernesto J. Vargas, a handsome and violent man of inferior social status who abandoned his wife, Dorita, when she was five months pregnant.

Mario, the fruit of that pregnancy, was told that his father was dead, but when he was ten Ernesto, having married again and fathered two more sons in the meantime, reëntered his life, reclaiming his mother and taking her and the boy out of the Llosa household in Piura, in northwesternmost Peru, to a small house in Lima, where he worked for the International News Service. In his son's account, Ernesto was a domestic tyrant who in fits of jealousy and class resentment beat his wife and young Mario, "as he warned me that he was going to straighten me out, to make a little man of me, because he wouldn't allow his son to be the sissy the Llosas had raised." Ernesto blamed his wife's family for fostering in the boy "fancy-pants ideas like saying that when I was grown up I'd be a bullfighter and a poet; his name was at stake and he wouldn't have a son who was a pansy." Mario was one of those children—numerous, to the world's shame—for whom home is hell. The child retreated into bitter avoidance of his father. Ironically, his precocious literary vocation was strengthened: "To write poems was another of the secret ways of resisting my father, since I knew how much it irritated him that I wrote verses, something he associated with eccentricity, bohemia, and what could horrify him most: being queer." Even when Mario had become a successful and famous adult, their rapprochement was gingerly at best, and had broken down entirely by the time Ernesto died. The menace in Vargas Llosa's fiction, then, wears a different, more distinctly male face than the moldering morbidity in Gabriel García Márquez or the epic knife fights in Jorge Luis Borges. Vargas Llosa's repeated recourse, as an artist, to drearily masculine worlds can be read as both an exposure of and an homage to the dreaded father who didn't want his boy to be a pansy.



How have the author's three years in politics affected his fiction?

DAVID LEVINE

Some psychological dredging seems necessary to explain this highly cultivated and resourceful author's fascination with the bleak and drab character of Corporal Lituma, of the Peruvian Civil Guard, who here participates in a fourth novel. Guardsman Lituma, in love with a prostitute and usually drunk, was one of the many characters in "The Green House" (1965; 1968). Sergeant Lituma figures as the hero of the fourth chapter of the floridly inventive "Aunt Julia and the Scriptwriter" (1977; 1982). As Officer Lituma, a *cholo* (half-breed) playing Watson to the suave, pure-white Lieutenant Silva, he is the secondary detective in "Who Killed Palomino Molero?" (1986; 1987); at the end of that brief, brutish tale of military skulduggery, Lituma is transferred to an Andean province. "So what do we get for our trouble?" Silva says to him on parting. "You're transferred to the mountains, far from your heat and your people. . . . That's how they thank you for a job well done in the Guardia Civil." Lituma seems to represent for Vargas Llosa the dogged and thankless pursuit of order and justice in a society increasingly short of both. He may represent as well the driving force of intellectual curiosity; Lituma always presses to unravel the mystery, even when there is less than nothing in it for him.

"Death in the Andes" is listed, in "A Fish in the Water," among five projects that Vargas Llosa was planning to undertake before he unexpectedly, in 1987, became ensnared in a three-year campaign for political change in Peru:

> A novel, something between a detective story and a fictional fantasy, about cataclysms, human sacrifices, and political crimes in a village in the Andes.

The elements are all here, in this recently published novel, but they are present in a desiccated, rather cursory form, as though carried in the author's head too long. Lituma, equipped with an adjutant, Civil Guard Tomás Carreño, is the head officer in the Andean village of Naccos, once a mining center but now economically dependent on a road project employing two hundred laborers. Three men—a mute, an albino, and a highway foreman—have mysteriously disappeared. Lituma, as a man from the coastal district of Piura, is uneasy among the Quechua-speaking *serruchos*, the mountain people. Further, he is under constant threat of attack by the *terrucos*, the Sendero Luminoso terrorists, who haunt and afflict the region. Still, with the help of his Quechua-speaking adjutant, he worries away at the mysterious disappearances, his suspicions falling upon a dissolute couple who run the local cantina, Dionisio and Doña Adriana. The mystery is finally solved, but not before Lituma, in the shack where the two Civil Guardsmen sleep, has heard Tomás tell, in lovingly circumstantial detail, the story of his love affair with a showgirl, Mercedes, whom he impulsively rescued from a noisy session of rough sex with a drug dealer he was supposed to be guarding.

This intricately stratified novel also provides lectures from an Incaphile gringo on Andean prehistory and folk religion, and some reminiscing interior monologues of Doña Adriana, and chilling descriptions of terrorist attacks on helpless people and vicuñas. The Sendero Luminoso episodes are underplayed, tersely conjuring up the mixed innocence and ruthlessness of the terrorist bands:

> Daylight advanced rapidly across the plateau, and their bodies, their shapes, stood out clearly. They were young, they were adolescents, they were poor, and some of them were children. In addition to rifles, revolvers, machetes, and sticks, many of them held large stones in their hands.

Stones, it turns out, are the favored instruments of execution, which is carried out upon, among others, the well-intentioned and self-confident journalist and lecturer Señora d'Harcourt, who has made Peru her adopted country. She is told by a member of the terrorist tribunal, "a young man with a full beard and cold, gray, penetrating eyes," that she must die:

> "This is war, and you are a lackey of our class enemy. . . . You don't even realize that you are a tool of imperialism and the bourgeois state. Even worse, you permit yourself the luxury of a clear conscience, seeing yourself as Peru's Good Samaritan. Your case is typical."

By the light of Maoist absolutism, everything constructive in the Andes—tree plantations, vicuña herds, the strands of commerce, the local governments—must be destroyed to create the New Democracy. Vargas Llosa, a Communist in his university days and now a Thatcheresque free-market advocate, understands both the case for revolution and the savagery of its workings. His *terrucos* are persuasively frightening in a way that his *apus* (bloodthirsty pre-Christian spirits of the Andes) and his *pishtacos* (cave-dwelling wizards who eat their victims) are not, quite. Though one does not doubt that he has been to the Andes, his mountains have the feel of papier-mâché. Their powerful emblematic appearance is not matched, somehow, by a mountainous weight:

> And on the horizon, along the Cordillera where rock and sky met, there was that strange color, somewhere between violet and purple, which he had seen reproduced on so many Indian skirts and shawls and on the woolen bags the campesinos hung from the ears of their llamas; for him it was the color of the Andes, of this mysterious, violent sierra.

Even when Lituma is caught in a *huayco*, an avalanche, the event feels more literary than geological. Literary indeed is Vargas Llosa's calling his sleazy, suspicious *cantinero* Dionisio and contriving for him a Dionysian past, in which he travelled the Andean fiesta circuit with a company of musicians and dancers—"wild girls who cooked during the day and at night went crazy and did outrageous things," Peruvian maenads who went "from petting to scratching, from kissing to biting, from hugging to shoving, without ever stopping the dance." Dionisio says of such orgiastic behavior, "They paid a visit to their animal,"

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—David Remnick, from the Introduction

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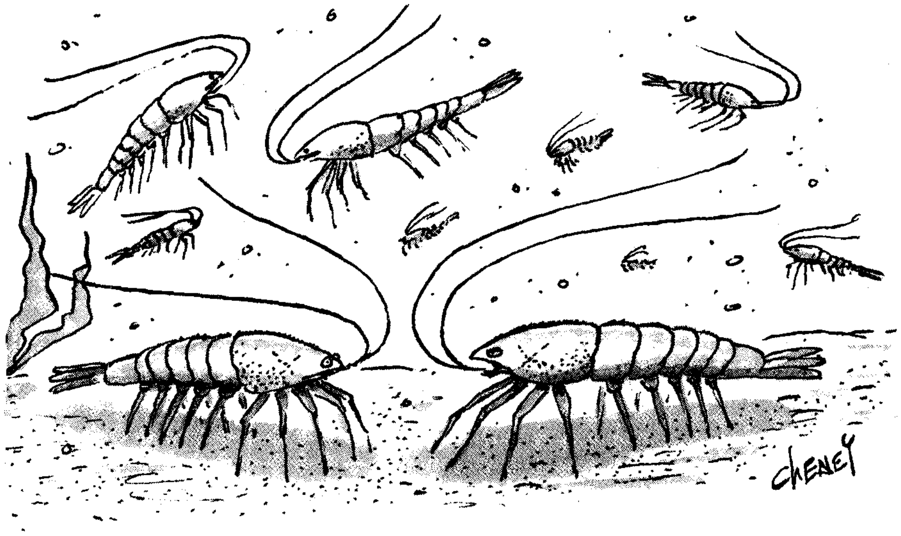
and, like a good Reichian or reader of D. H. Lawrence, advises everyone to try it.

"Death in the Andes" is rich fare, hastily and confusingly served. Half as many strands, more fully developed, would have made a better novel. With an impatient mastery that does not let us forget the author, we are pulled from Dionisio's revels and the Indian road builders' sullen plight to Tomás's romantic memories of Mercedes and Lituma's homesickness for the Piuran desert, from Andean lowlife to the mystic highlands of anthropological lore. Vargas Llosa is one of those Latin writers incurably bitten by the Faulkner bug. He tells us in "A Fish in the Water" that his discovery of Faulkner in the nineteen-fifties "left me so bedazzled that I still haven't recovered." He goes on:

> He was the first writer whom I studied with paper and pencil in hand, taking notes so as not to get lost in his genealogical labyrinths and shifts of time and points of view, and also trying to unearth the secrets of the baroque construction that each one of his stories was based on, the serpentine language, the fracturing of chronological sequence, the mystery and the profundity and the disturbing ambiguities and psychological subtleties which that form gave to his stories.

The shifts of time and point of view, the baroque construction, the serpentineness that Faulkner at his best carries off in a kind of bardic transport seem in much of Vargas Llosa mechanical: his use of alternate chapters each conveying a different narrative has become almost a tic. A nervous tic: the storyteller tells several stories at once, as if he didn't trust a single story to be interesting and meaningful enough. Tomás's account of his entanglement with Mercedes, for instance, is constantly interrupted by Lituma's rude, sex-starved comments, in dialogue easy to confuse with the dialogue Tomás is recounting. There is too much dialogue, in fact, and too little scenery, architecture, physiognomy, and other such appurtenances of realism. Vargas Llosa began, in early novels like "The Green House" and "Conversation in the Cathedral" (1969; 1975), with a Joycean, Faulknerian will to tell it all—to deliver all the Peruvian reality available to his imagination. The realist impulse seems, for the moment, to have been worn down by his strenuous, fruitless trek on the campaign trail. He has exiled himself from Fujimori's Peru, and his remarks on the nation in "A Fish in the Water" are pessimistic and bitter. Campaign-trail familiarity may have bred, if not contempt, a queasy satiation. After narrowly failing to become President of his country, can a writer still aspire to be what Joyce grandly, vaguely called "the uncreated conscience of my race"? There are arresting, plausible evocations in "Death in the Andes"—the young *terrucos* in the sleepy dawn, the recalling of the old days when peddlers and entertainers roved the Andes without fear—but they exist as adumbrations of some larger, more relaxed, less manipulative work, with the same title, which has not been written. ♦



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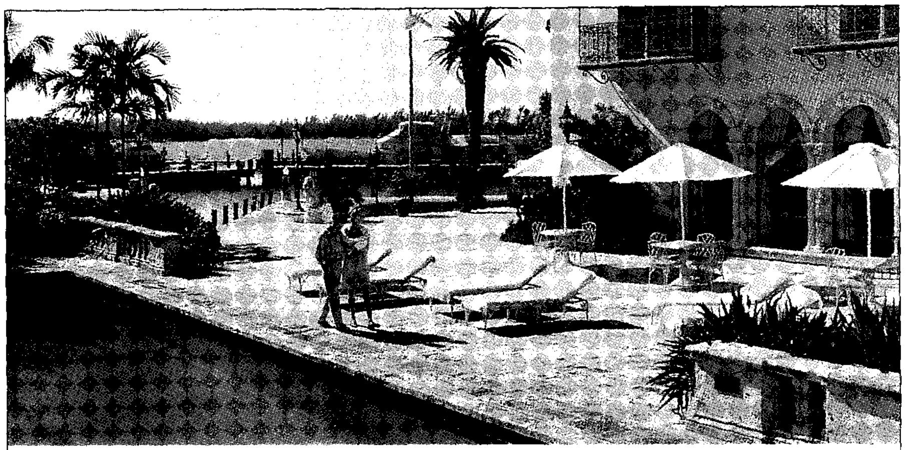

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LOOPHOLES FOR LIVING

When the means justify the ends.

BY MALCOLM GLADWELL

LEO KATZ begins "Ill-Gotten Gains: Evasion, Blackmail, Fraud, and Kindred Puzzles of the Law" (Chicago; $29.95), his elegant defense of circumvention and subterfuge, with a fable for tax day. There was once, he writes, a wealthy shoemaker who was looking for a way to lessen the burden of supporting his son, to whom he was paying, year in and year out, an annual allowance of a thousand dollars. Cutting him off wasn't an option, because the shoemaker loved his son dearly. Nor was writing the thousand dollars off his taxes, because the I.R.S., understandably, doesn't allow family gifts to serve as tax deductions. But the shoemaker had a brainstorm. He gave his son ten thousand dollars, and then he asked for that same amount back in the form of a business loan, promising in return to pay interest on the loan at the rate of ten per cent a year, which amounts, of course, to a thousand dollars. Voilà! With a minor sleight of hand, the shoemaker turns his family obligation into a seemingly legitimate business deduction.

Leo Katz

This is what Katz, who teaches law at the University of Pennsylvania, calls "avoision"—behavior a little too fishy to seem like simple avoidance of illegality but not so obviously illegal as to constitute clear-cut evasion. Avoision covers those acts which lie in the awkward middle, and Katz sees the potential for avoision everywhere in the modern world. Imagine, for example, a tourist from a third-world country who comes to America and decides, at the last minute, that she wants to stay here. She then makes a series of provocative statements about her country which render her unwelcome at home and thereby qualify her for political asylum. Or what about a pornographer who, worried about running afoul of decency laws with his collection of highly explicit photographs, decides to put them in a book entitled "Sex in Marriage," together with long, windy essays on the future of marriage. The shoemaker, the tourist, and the pornographer all adhere to the form of the law, but they violate its spirit: they have exploited a loophole. Is what they are doing right? Should they be allowed to get away with it?

I think it's fair to say that most of us, intuitively, have a problem with avoision. Few would raise much of a fuss if the opportunistic tourist was deported, and even fewer would be fooled by the pornographer's cynical repackaging. And if the wealthy shoemaker managed to slip his ruse past the I.R.S. we would expect him at the very least to have the decency to be ashamed of what he had done. Even the authors of the self-help tax books that proliferate at this time of year rarely present their various tax-dodging schemes without some kind of moral justification. ("What is most important is not what a tax law says, but how the I.R.S. interprets and acts on it," Martin Kaplan and Naomi Weiss write in the best-selling "What the I.R.S. Doesn't Want You to Know," after reeling off a handful of anecdotes of capricious and vindictive government audits.) In fact, if the brief rise of Steve Forbes teaches us anything, it is that Americans have come to associate the paperwork, the complexity, and the game-playing surrounding the tax code with its corruption. What is the flat tax, after all, but a secular version of the tithe, an attempt to imbue what has become essentially a commercial transaction between citizen and state with the purity and simplicity of religious obligation?

This is the attitude that "Ill-Gotten Gains" sets out to confront. Katz likes loopholes. He thinks that the wealthy shoemaker has a point. And if, in the end, Katz is not entirely convincing it does not really matter. This is a heroically counterintuitive book that will make it difficult to think about tax day in quite the same way again.

THE problem with the way we feel about loopholes, according to Katz, is that we don't give them enough credit. We think of them in narrow, legal terms, as the unintended result of badly drafted laws. If the wealthy shoemaker can get away with masking his son's allowance as a business deduction, it's assumed that there is something amiss with the law, or with the vigilance of the I.R.S. But avoision is something that runs much deeper than that.

Katz produces one example after another from history and literature—from the confrontation between Neil Klugman and Brenda Patimkin over her diaphragm in Philip Roth's "Goodbye Columbus" to the way Freud phrased his exit statement to the Gestapo upon leaving Vienna—to prove that avoision is a kind of basic human strategy. Consider this, for example, from Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein's Watergate memoir, "All the President's Men." Katz quotes the passage where the two Washington *Post* reporters are trying to get a senior Justice Department official to confirm off the record a rumor that Nixon's chief of staff, H. R. Haldeman, was about to be indicted:

> "I'd like to help you, I really would," said the lawyer. "But I just can't say anything."
>
> Bernstein thought for a moment and told the man they understood why he couldn't say anything. So they would do it another way: Bernstein would count to 10. If there was any reason for the reporters to hold back on the story, the lawyer should hang up before 10. If he was on the line after 10, it would mean the story was okay.
>
> "Hang up, right?" the lawyer asked.
>
> That was right, Bernstein instructed, and he started counting. Okay, Bernstein said, and thanked him effusively.
>
> "You've got it straight now?" the lawyer asked.

This is classic avoision, a perfectly transparent piece of self-justification. Failing to deny the story has exactly the same consequence as confirming it. Nonetheless, in the eyes of the lawyer the difference between those alternatives was quite real. Using the loophole allowed him to live with his own conscience, to convince himself that he had not actively violated the confidentiality requirements of his position.

It is Katz's argument that we play these avoision games all the time, and that, far from being trivial or contemptible ruses, they embody real moral distinctions. Here is another of his many examples, involving a trolley driver

ISADORE SELTZER

whose brakes are shot. As the driver hurtles along, he comes to a fork in the track. Ahead are five people who cannot get out of the way in time. To his right is one person stranded on the track. We would all agree, I think, that the trolley driver should steer right, choosing to kill one person instead of five. But now consider an analogous situation: A physician has in his hospital five people who will die unless they receive immediate organ transplants. Two need kidneys. Two need lungs. One needs a heart. At that moment, a perfectly healthy person walks into the doctor's office. The doctor realizes that if he sacrifices that patient he can save five lives for the price of one. But this time, it's safe to say, no one would maintain that the physician should act as the trolley driver did. It's not good enough to want to save lives. You have to save lives in the right way.

This, at least, is what Katz believes. He describes himself as a "deontologist," which is to say that he thinks the morality of any outcome depends very much on how that outcome is achieved. It is in the illustration of this point that "Ill-Gotten Gains" truly takes flight. In one brilliant riff in the middle of the book's first section, for example, Katz gleefully plunges into Jesuitical theology, since he believes that the Jesuits were the ones who raised hairsplitting and loopholes to an art. Let's say that one wants to guiltlessly communicate an untruth. All one need do is, in the words of a Jesuit theologian quoted by Katz, "swear . . . that one has not done something, though one really has done it, by inwardly understanding that one did not do it on a certain day, or before one was born, or by implying some other similar circumstance."

Ridiculous? Not really, says Katz. For a man to disguise himself as a woman's boyfriend, creep into her bedroom in the middle of the night, and have sex with her is rape. But if another man met the same woman at a bar and by pretending to be a famous C.E.O. successfully seduced her his falsehood in that instance would not invalidate her consent. In other words, here are two lies, identical in their intent and in their result. Yet one is a crime and the other, however deplorable, is not. The Jesuits had a point. The circumstances under which a lie is told can make a big difference. Or consider the case of a woman standing in line for a movie who sees a man pointing a pistol right at her. If she grabs the person behind her and uses that person as a shield, we would say she was guilty, at least, of manslaughter. If she simply ducks, and the bullet hits and kills the person behind her, we would call her lucky—even if she was fully aware that if she ducked the person behind her would die.

This is how Katz resolves the question of whether the wealthy shoemaker is in the right. Here we have two identical actions—the gift of a thousand dollars from father to son. But in the first case the gift is direct, and in the second case it is not. The father gives the son an asset, and that asset, in turn, generates the income. How important is this distinction? Well, imagine that the son took his father's ten thousand dollars, put it in the bank, and lived off the interest. And suppose the shoemaker borrows ten thousand dollars not from his son but from the same bank at an identical interest rate. This is essentially the same transaction as before, just a bit more roundabout. But now no one would deny the shoemaker his tax deduction.

According to Katz, there is an important ethical principle involved here. Suppose I had designed the world's most powerful telescope, the only machine capable of glimpsing far-off planets. If I discovered a new galaxy and published my results under my son's name, we would all agree that my son would not deserve the ensuing fame. It would be like John F. Kennedy's accepting the Pulitzer Prize for "Profiles in Courage," a book that he is often said not to have written. You can't assign your fame to someone else. But suppose I gave the telescope to my son, and, armed with this unique instrument, he stumbled upon the same discovery. Now we would all concede that at least some of the fame due to this discovery should accrue to my son. Putting a little distance between the father and the son changes everything.

HOW far should we go in accepting Katz's deontological fixation? Does he go overboard in his adherence to form? This is the question raised, indirectly, by a Yale University law professor, Stephen L. Carter, in his new book, "Integrity," an essay-length exploration of the consequences of the decline of public morality. Carter argues that integrity requires three things: "(1) *discerning* what is right and what is wrong; (2) *acting* on what you have discerned, even at personal cost; and (3) *saying openly* that

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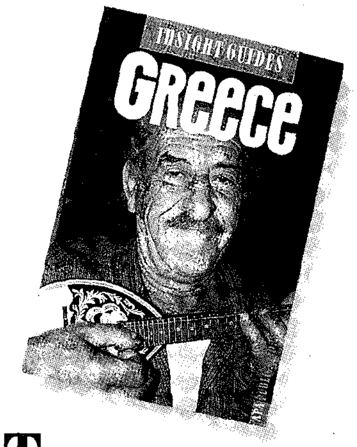

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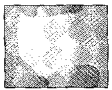
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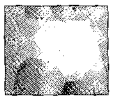
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you are acting on your understanding of right from wrong." Like Katz, Carter believes that an action should be judged by how it came about, by its adherence to rights and rules, by its form. But Carter's idea of form is far more restrictive than Katz's. Carter's precepts don't seem to make much of an ethical distinction, for example, between the man who posed as a woman's boyfriend in order to seduce her and the man who posed as a C.E.O. Neither had discerned right from wrong. Neither was acting on what he had discerned and certainly neither was "saying openly" that he was doing what he thought was right. Carter locates the morality of an act in its intention: Did the man deliberately mislead in the aid of the seduction? Katz is much more sensitive to the particulars of the act's execution.

A good example of this difference is found in an anecdote Carter tells at the beginning of his book about an incident he once saw while watching a football game on television. A player who had failed to catch a pass thrown his way rolled on the field, scooped up the ball, and jumped up, exultantly, as if he had caught the ball after all. The referee, shielded partially from the play, was so misled by the player's acting that he ruled the pass complete. The player, Carter concludes, lied, and he presents this incident as a telling example of the lack of integrity in American public life.

For the sake of argument, however, let's add two new wrinkles to the story. Suppose that the player, after scooping up the ball, didn't go through the pantomime of exultation. He simply ran over to the referee and loudly and hotly began insisting that he had caught the ball, even though he knew that he hadn't. Or suppose that the player, after attempting the catch, made no attempt to convince the referee that he had caught the ball at all. He was tired, and sick of playing football, and no longer interested in winning, so he shrugged and walked away, indifferent to the outcome of the game. Carter's rules, I think, end up lumping the faker, the arguer, and the quitter together: in one way or another, they all fail his integrity test.

Now, let's imagine how Katz would think about this incident. In the first instance, I think he might make the case that the faker was practicing avoision. Football, after all, deliberately does not use instant replay to review close calls. It relies on the judgment of referees, even though that judgment will occasionally be flawed, or there will be plays (like this one) that the referees cannot see. That's the loophole the player was exploiting—the inherent subjectivity of the way the rules are enforced. Notice as well how he chose to exploit this loophole. Carter says that the faker lied. But that's not quite right. It was the arguer who lied. He purposefully and directly misrepresented what happened on the play to the referee, putting himself clearly outside the realm of good sportsmanship. By contrast, the faker didn't say anything at all. What he did was bluff, and if Carter doesn't see a difference between lying and bluffing then I hereby extend to him a permanent invitation to my poker game.

That leaves us with the quitter, who is the only player who does not attempt to mislead. But isn't he really the worst of the three? Sports—organized games—can continue to function if players attempt to mislead one another, because there are referees who (most of the time) will catch and punish that conduct. But sports can't survive if players no longer try. The quitter, whose actions make him appear to be the most honest of the players, actually threatens the integrity of the entire game.

The point of all of this is that Carter's rules, for all their superficial appeal, turn out to be somewhat unsatisfying. Because he won't go as far as Katz in scrutinizing the form of actions, he ends up papering over some fairly important distinctions. Yes, in some broad moral sense all three of the players lack a certain integrity. But there isn't a football player in the world who *wouldn't rather* play with fakers than with arguers, or with arguers than with quitters.

This is not to say that Katz prefers those who play avoision games to those who act with perfect integrity, although it is sometimes tempting to read his book this way, since he spends so much time and enthusiasm talking about the people searching for loopholes and not a great deal of time talking about people who play fair. What Katz is trying to do is show that the loophole is not an arbitrary creation, that the ambiguities of our law reflect deep ethical conundrums that cannot be wished away. There is, in other words, a certain deontological dignity to our tortuous circumventions of the I.R.S. If the Jesuit theologians of the seventeenth century were here today, Katz believes, they would probably all be accountants, which is, when you think about it, probably the nicest thing anyone has ever said about the tax system. ◆

SHOWCASE

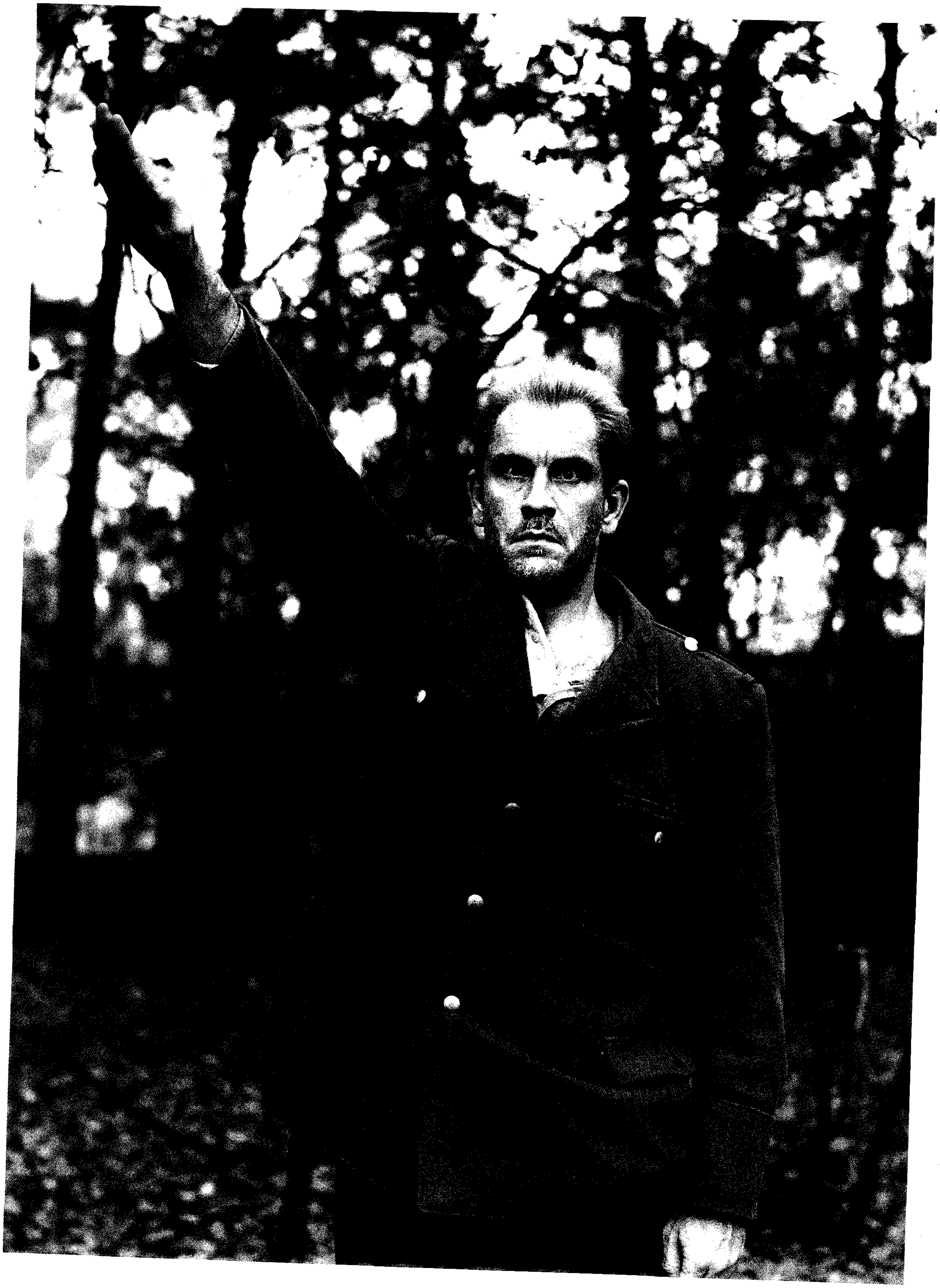
THE DARK SIDE

So peculiar an actor is John Malkovich that it would be dangerous to classify his work too specifically, and yet it does seem that two kinds of roles in particular tempt him. There is the steamroller Malkovich, exemplified by his entrance in the 1987 play "Burn This," in a kind of lyrical 'roid rage that left the audience reeling. There is also the more sinister Malkovich, who excels at portraits of aesthetic languor: think of his Valmont, in "Dangerous Liaisons," devilishly violating an underage Uma Thurman, or even the more eerily contemporary assassin of "In the Line of Fire," a virtuoso of disguise not seen since the heyday of Alec Guinness. Malkovich's current assignment, in Stephen Jeffreys' Restoration-era drama "The Libertine," at Chicago's Steppenwolf Theatre (through April 14th), blends both tendencies. As the Earl of Rochester, Malkovich drinks copiously, recites poetry, and consorts with beauties of both sexes. And, true to his Steppenwolf training, he can rise to fever pitch.

Malkovich recently renewed another acquaintance related to his career onstage. In 1984, he was a memorable Biff on Broadway in a Dustin Hoffman-driven "Death of a Salesman," which was later filmed for television. The director of the film was Volker Schlöndorff, with whom Malkovich spent much of last year doing the movie adaptation of Michel Tournier's 1970 novel, "The Ogre." (It is slated for release later this year.) Malkovich plays a French auto mechanic who as a prisoner in Prussia during the Second World War comes under the sway of his captors. "The film is about the Nazi in us," the actor says. Tournier's fable is filled with unseemly elements—heavy fetishism, coprology—so Malkovich is sure to have drawn on his talent for depravity. And he is certain to have grasped Tournier's underlying theme: the loneliness of desire. —BRENDAN LEMON

PHOTOGRAPH
BY HELMUT NEWTON

John Malkovich, Berlin, November 25, 1995.



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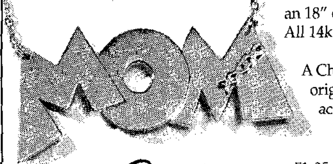

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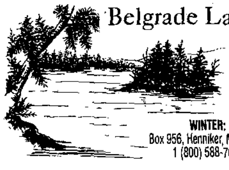

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BRIEFLY NOTED

THE BOOK OF SECRETS, by M. G. Vassanji (Picador; $24). The diary of a British colonial administrator in Kenya during the First World War is read for the first time in 1988, by an Indian schoolteacher in Tanzania. It sets him on the trail of a mystery, at whose center is a beauty engaged to a spy; these old traces eventually connect an incognito poet and an Afro-Indian couple reminiscent of Rita Hayworth and Aly Khan with the narrator's own missed opportunities. As a love affair with the past, this exquisite, tender, and possibly great novel surely encompasses every irony of cultural assimilation to be found in seventy-five years of East African history.

A HEART SO WHITE, by Javier Marías; translated from the Spanish by Margaret Jull Costa (Harvill; $24). A recently wedded interpreter suffering from a tough case of matrimonial anxiety gradually learns the truth about his roguish, multiply widowed father, both through the indiscretion of family friends and through the craftiness of his young bride, who chivvies the old fox into revealing his ugly secret. This novel of ideas proposes that language is intrinsically treacherous: "The truth doesn't depend on things actually existing or happening, but on their remaining hidden or unknown or untold."

THE END OF ALICE, by A. M. Homes (Scribners; $22). Alice is the answer to a pedophile's prayers: a lithe twelve-year-old who, according to the feverishly unreliable ruminations of the novel's monstrous narrator, insinuates herself into his bed and experiments with his affections. In the course of serving twenty-three years for her murder, he grudgingly has accepted a different sexual fate. But when he begins receiving letters from a female college student recounting her seduction of a pubescent boy, he can no longer keep his "dubious daydreams" to himself, and his dark history, both as abuser and abused, spews forth with explosive malevolence.

JACKSON'S DILEMMA, by Iris Murdoch (Viking; $22.95). This short, bewitched novel is Dame Iris's "Cymbeline." When Jackson, the hero manqué, is hired as a manservant by Benet (whose fondness for arranging his friends' lives has them keeping secrets), his first job is to fix the electricity, but his real one, it turns out, is to give everything an airing. Even at this brisk clip, watching Murdoch put her dark horses—Virtue, Patience, Ardor, and Humility—through their paces is more interesting than reading almost anything else.

ATTICUS, by Ron Hansen (HarperCollins; $22). The most seductive character in any prodigal-son story is not the son but the father who inexplicably forgives him. In this redemptive novel, Atticus's youngest child, Scott, is a painter and a drinker who unwittingly killed his mother in a car crash and has careered off to Resurreccion, Mexico, to escape his demons. One February morning, Scott's ex-girlfriend calls with the news that he has committed suicide, and Atticus journeys south to find "the hidden value *x* that would solve the algebra of his boy." His travails never become maudlin, and the twist, when it comes, is faultlessly clever.

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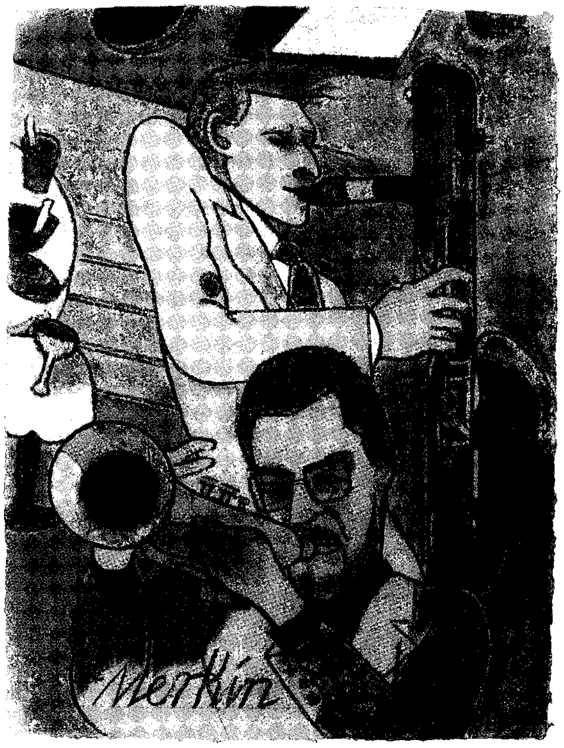
JAZZ

TOM AND JERU

Tom Harrell arrives, and remembering Gerry Mulligan.

BY WHITNEY BALLIETT

THE fads that have long swirled across jazz sometimes make the progress of unfashionable worthies so arduous that if and when they gain recognition they are middle-aged and out of steam. Older musicians, of course, generally know who these starvelings are, and go out of their way to use them on records and for gigs. At present, the best-known unknown is the brilliant forty-nine-year-old trumpeter, flugelhornist, and composer Tom Harrell, whom the alto saxophonist Phil Woods has called a "genius" and "the best musician I've encountered in forty years of playing music." Since the early seventies, Harrell has worked his way through Woody Herman's band, Horace Silver's group, the Woods quintet, Charlie Haden's Liberation Music Orchestra, and the Mel Lewis band. Finally, in the late eighties, he put together his own small group, and, perhaps more important, he began recording and doing dates with the equally brilliant saxophonist Joe Lovano. "Tom is thrilling to play with," Lovano said recently. "He's a poetic musician, and one of the most beautiful of all improvisers. He's a completely free player, an emotional player. Sometimes his chops can't handle all his ideas, and if he isn't executing right I've seen him put down his trumpet in the middle of a solo and pick up his flugelhorn. When we worked together with just bass and drums for a week at the Village Vanguard in 1994, we went beyond technique and form. The music became pure expression. At times, it seemed as if it might blow right past us." Harrell himself has said of those nights at the Vanguard, "The groove was transcendent. I felt as if the bandstand were rising above the floor." During the last week in March, Harrell and Lovano were back at the Vanguard with a quartet, offering surprising proof, with their echoing, dissonant ensembles and chordless solos, that the revolutionary Ornette Coleman group of 1959 has become old hat. (A live recording, which includes selections from the now famous 1994 gig, was recently released on Blue Note as "Joe Lovano Quartets: Live at the Village Vanguard.")



Pushing the music forward: the saxophonist Gerry Mulligan (1927-96) and the trumpeter Tom Harrell.

RICHARD MERKIN

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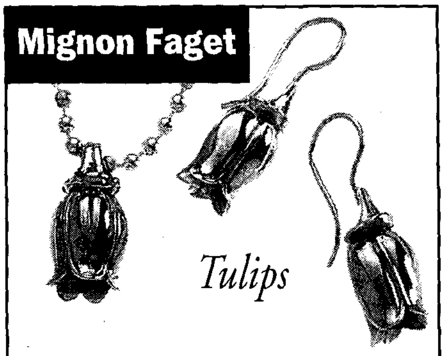

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were the kings of jazz. From Louis Armstrong, the great originator, came Red Allen, and from Allen and the mad Jabbo Smith came Roy Eldridge, who brought forth Dizzy Gillespie. From Gillespie came Miles Davis and—after a mysterious pause of thirty years—Wynton Marsalis, Wallace Roney, and Terence Blanchard. But Gillespie also tinted the work of his extraordinary compeer Fats Navarro, whose long, sure melodic lines, infallible sense of order, and big tone sometimes made Gillespie sound like the Wild Man of Borneo. So powerful was Navarro's style that his influence formed a separate, parallel line alongside Gillespie's. But Navarro's line of succession kept breaking down. Navarro himself died at the age of twenty-six, in 1950, and his sparkling offspring Clifford Brown was killed in an automobile accident six years later. The next neo-Navarros, Booker Little and Lee Morgan, came along almost simultaneously, but the gifted Little died at twenty-three, in 1961, and the astonishing Morgan was murdered at the age of thirty-three, in 1972. Woody Shaw reactivated the Navarro line in the mid-seventies, and it now reposes in Tom Harrell.

But Harrell is not merely Navarro's descendant. Lovano says, "Once Tom hears a piece of music, he memorizes it. I think he can play all of Diz's and Parker's most famous solos." What Harrell does in his solos is pay his almost imperceptible respects to the best of his predecessors. You may hear a flash of Clark Terry, a Navarro-like melodic line, some of Harry Edison's bravura coloring, a Clifford Brown cascade, a Miles Davis rumination. He improvises on his heritage, but he also tries to invent music that has never been heard before. Lovano has pointed out that there are two Harrells—a restrained studio Harrell and a hellbent night-club Harrell. (In much the same way, there are two Lovanos.) The studio Harrell likes to leave spaces between his phrases, and he likes to shift into lilting double-time passages on slow numbers. He often uses his flugelhorn in the studio; it has, of course, a bigger tone than the trumpet, a sound that trumpeters like to sink into. Listen to the studio Harrell on his two tracks on Jim Hall's recent "Dialogues" CD on Telarc—in particular, "Skylark," in which Harrell plays a nearly straight chorus of melody and then improvises, gently turning Hoagy Carmichael's song into an urgent, complex lullaby. And listen to the sly and mysterious "I Can't Get Started" on Lovano's Village Vanguard CD, where Harrell, following an extraordinary Lovano solo, unreels ascending and descending ribbons of sixteenth notes that go on so long you fear he has become obsessed and may never stop. But he does, suddenly, gathering himself, and loosing several bent, italicized half-time phrases and three descending notes before racing up the next hill. Harrell *composes* his solos as he plays, and he makes his listeners work, as all first-rate improvisers do. If your mind wanders, though, you will be left standing there while the Harrellmobile vanishes over the horizon.

HARRELL was born in Urbana, Illinois, in 1946, and grew up in Palo Alto, California. His father is a retired business psychologist, and his mother is a statistician. He has an older sister who is the principal of a school in Minnesota. He started playing music early—piano first, then trumpet—and by the time he was a teen-ager he was gigging around San Francisco. He had a rocky time in high school and college (Stanford), drinking and carrying on. He was, in short, a social maladroit, and once he even attempted suicide. When he was in his early twenties, it was determined that he was a schizophrenic, and he was put on a drug that has since enabled him to live a somewhat normal life. The drug has side effects. It gives him headaches and makes his muscles relax, causing him to shuffle when he walks, and to stand stock-still on the bandstand between his solos, with his head resting almost on his chest and his horn hanging from one hand. (He is six feet two inches tall, and bone thin.) A fluent talker when the vibes are right, he likes to let aphoristic thoughts float to the surface of his conversations. Thus:

> Form is rhythm on a larger scale.
>
> I like to use my mind to push the music forward.
>
> It's nice to give your listeners the feeling they're in their homes when you play, to

make even an amphitheatre feel like their living room.
In jazz, you can transcend your ego with the music.
The first music was made by birds and water and trees.

Harrell feels that improvisation and composing are the same thing, just carried out at different speeds. He is a striking composer, who works both tonally and atonally, and who has a genuine gift for mournful, minor-sounding melodies. "I tend to write in fragments," he has said. "I store these, then go back to them and put them together—like an architect. I like twelve- or sixteen-bar phrases, unconventional lengths. The arranger Russ Garcia once told me to sing before I write music." Lovano says of Harrell's composing, "Everything he writes has its own flavor. He writes for the moment, for the people he is recording or playing with. He'll use very complex harmonies and simple melodies, or complex bebop-type melodies and relaxed harmonies. But his tunes never crowd you."

RCA Victor has just signed Harrell to a contract, and his first album will be released next month. There are two groups on the album: his quintet, and the quintet expanded to a nonet, which includes—who else?—Joe Lovano. The Harrell scoring on a couple of the nonet numbers is so dense and full of basso-profundo sounds that you can almost lean against them. The RCA contract has cheered Harrell immeasurably. It reminds him of a time when, still a kid, he sat in with Lee Morgan in San Francisco. "I guess he liked me," Harrell said the other day. "When I came off the bandstand, he told me, 'Hey, you're a motherfucker, and I'm not going to let you sit in anymore.' " Harrell then doubled over with laughter, his head nearly touching the floor, and let loose a soft, curving sound that would have fitted into any of his solos.

DURING the fifties and early sixties, Gerry Mulligan, who died early this year, was at the very heart of jazz. He was an excellent arranger and a good, light, lyrical baritone saxophonist. (He had earlier been the bedrock, as an arranger and player, of Miles Davis's famous "Birth of the Cool" sessions.) And he was a canny inventor of small miracles: the pianoless contrapuntal quartet that he put together in California in 1952, which had Chet Baker on trumpet; the loose, driving sextet featuring Zoot Sims on tenor saxophone and Bob Brookmeyer on trombone, which lasted only a year or so in the mid-fifties and was the best group he ever had; and his complex, elegant thirteen-piece "concert" band of 1960. Always quicksilver, he seemed in those days to be everywhere in the music—striding onstage with his huge horn to sit in during festivals and concerts, jamming late into the night, and recording not only with his own groups but with such heroes as Ben Webster, Thelonious Monk, Johnny Hodges, and Paul Desmond.

Two remarkable, often moving records that celebrate his best days have surfaced since his death—"The Gerry Mulligan Songbook," on the Pacific Jazz label, and "Gerry Mulligan and the Concert Jazz Band," a two-CD release on RTE. The "Songbook" includes seven buoyant, long-out-of-print cuts made in 1957 with the saxophonists Lee Konitz, Allen Eager, Zoot Sims, and Al Cohn, and four never-before-issued numbers recorded a day or two later with a kind of string quartet made up of guitar, bass, cello, and violin. Among the string-quartet tracks, "The Preacher" and "Good Bait" feature two of the best solos Mulligan ever recorded. The Concert Jazz Band album, which is also being issued for the first time, was recorded in 1960 at a concert in Paris. It is a marvellous glimpse of that loose, swinging, subtle group—a big band that always had the sound and the agility of a small band.

Mulligan was tall and impossibly thin: in his earlier years, with his cropped red hair and not-to-say-smug grin, he looked like Uriah Heep; much later, hidden in a great aureole of white hair, he looked like God. Nicknamed Jeru, he was a bright, funny, arrogant man who relished himself. In 1957, he was asked if he would appear on the rehearsal recording that Columbia Records planned to make four days before the live CBS television show "The Sound of Jazz." He said he'd be delighted—for double scale. Columbia said no, and hired Duke Ellington's Harry Carney, the grand master of the baritone saxophone. There is no one like Mulligan left in jazz. ♦

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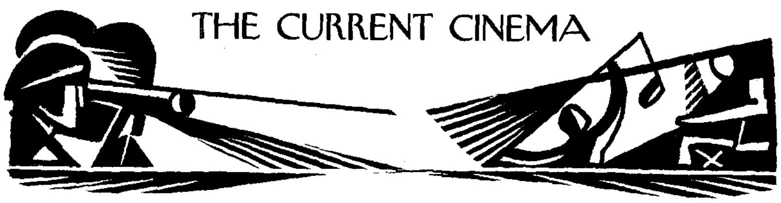


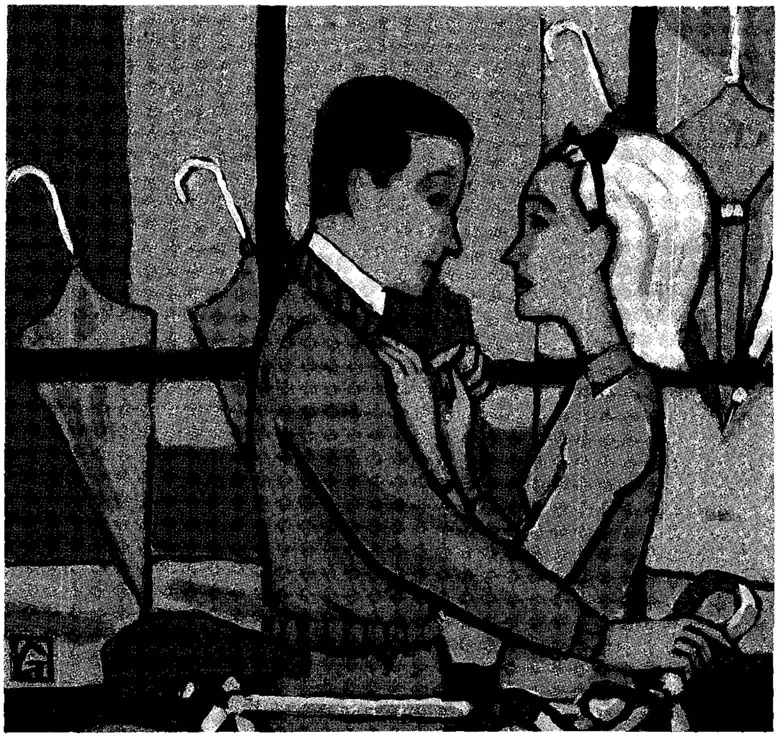
THE CURRENT CINEMA

THE PAST RECAPTURED

"The Umbrellas of Cherbourg" and "Flirting with Disaster."

BY TERRENCE RAFFERTY

When Jacques Demy's "The Umbrellas of Cherbourg" was first released, in 1964, it won the top prize at the Cannes Film Festival and became an enormous hit in both France and the United States, but the passage of time has been cruel to this lovely and fragile picture. Because the film was shot in the notoriously unstable Eastman color process, its glorious colors quickly faded. The prints deteriorated so badly that no self-respecting revival-house programmer would dare show them, and the home video that was dumped on the American market in the mid-eighties was a disgrace: Demy's vibrant images look smudged and runny, like Matisse sketches left out in the rain. Some great films can survive any indignity, but "The Umbrellas of Cherbourg"—a stylized, unabashedly emotional story of lost love, in which all the dialogue is sung—is much too delicate. It is, in fact, just the sort of movie that viewers tend not to trust their memories of, suspecting that the feelings it once stirred up will now seem inexplicable, even embarrassing. And the movie is too eccentric and, for all its formal audacity, too innocent of theory to fit into film historians' tidy frameworks. (James Monaco's 1976 critical study, "The New Wave," for instance, dismisses it as an "operatic fairy tale" and compares it unfavorably with Godard's self-conscious, intellectualized musical "A Woman Is a Woman.") A completely restored print of "Umbrellas," from negatives that Demy prudently saved, is now showing in New York (at Film Forum), and will be circulating throughout the country in the next few months. The revival is gratifying proof that intense youthful passions aren't necessarily foolish ones. "The Umbrellas of Cherbourg" is a sight for sore eyes.



Nino Castelnuovo and Catherine Deneuve in "The Umbrellas of Cherbourg."

JEAN-CLAUDE GÖTTING

Demy's movie has, in fact, aged as gracefully as its impossibly beautiful leading lady, Catherine Deneuve, who was only twenty years old when the picture was released. Her character, Geneviève, is seventeen when the film begins—a restless provincial girl who rebels against her overprotective widowed mother (Anne Vernon) by stepping out with a handsome auto mechanic named Guy (Nino Castelnuovo). In the early scenes, Geneviève and Guy are idealized, movie-mythic young lovers, rushing across rainy nighttime streets into each other's arms, strolling and singing on the docks of the harbor, and professing their undying passion at every opportunity. The music (by Michel Legrand) that accompanies their courtship alternates between ebullient Latin-accented jazz and swoony Gallic balladry, and thus expresses both the bursting exuberance and the exquisite pain of adolescent love. Everywhere Geneviève and Guy go, they're surrounded by bright springtime colors, as if their story were taking place not in a small, dull English Channel port city but in a kind of garden. And Demy tracks the characters' progress with sinuous, gliding camera movements that, like the music and the colors, seem to transform the most mundane details into manifestations of earthly grace. Demy's style, a lyrical refinement of the conventions of Hollywood musicals, is riskier than it appears: romanticism in such a pure form is easy to sneer at.

"The Umbrellas of Cherbourg," that is, leaves itself vulnerable to the charge that it's merely a sweet, pretty, gooey confection. It's a picture that dares to evoke strong, basic emotions, and Demy obviously doesn't care if he's considered naïve. Or perhaps he simply couldn't help himself. It was clear from his first feature, "Lola" (made three years before "Umbrellas"), that his aesthetic aims were crucially different from those of New Wave peers like Godard and Truffaut and Chabrol. Unlike those directors, he had never been a film critic. He loved American movies as much as they did, but, while they played with and commented on Hollywood genres in their own films, Demy actually tried to re-create the kinds of movies that inspired him: romances, musicals, fairy tales. In "Jacquot de Nantes," the superb 1991 biographical film made by his widow, Agnès Varda (he died in 1990), the young Demy is portrayed not as an intellectual *cinéaste* but as a dreamy, solitary craftsman, teaching himself film technique in a loft

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above his family's service station and auto-repair shop. "Lola," set in Nantes, imagines his home town as the setting of a contemporary fairy-tale romance, in which the heroine, a night-club dancer, pines for the man who left her seven years earlier, and is rewarded for her heart's fidelity: out of the blue, her lost love returns, having made his fortune, and sweeps her away in a white Cadillac convertible. The black-and-white cinematography, by Raoul Coutard, gives "Lola" the natural-light look of a New Wave film, but Demy's picture has a classical structure and a unity of tone that set it apart from the work of his more freewheeling contemporaries.

In a way, "The Umbrellas of Cherbourg" is a much more pessimistic film than "Lola." Here first love turns out to be transitory, and, when it passes, the young lovers—contrary to their romantic expectations—do not wither and die. In fact, the hero of "Lola," Roland Cassard (Marc Michel), who lost Lola to *her* first love, turns up in "Umbrellas" and gets the girl. While Guy is in the Army, fighting in Algeria, Geneviève discovers that she's pregnant, and, under pressure from her mother, who has serious financial problems, she accepts the proposal of polite, prosperous Roland. (If you've seen "Lola," you have to be happy for him.) What's really surprising about "Umbrellas" is that the movie doesn't condemn Geneviève for turning her back on Guy: Demy shows how anxiety, absence, and the hero's erratic letter-writing combine to erode the force of Geneviève's feelings—not completely, but enough for her to be able to imagine life without him. And Guy, it turns out, can manage quite nicely without her. After his return, he goes through a short spell of bitterness and mild dissipation, then pulls himself together and marries his late godmother's nurse, Madeleine (Ellen Farner), who, once Geneviève has cleared out, is the most beautiful girl in town. The movie's final scene—an awkward, rueful chance meeting of the former lovers, years later—is pretty much guaranteed to send audiences out of the theatre in tears, but it isn't tragic. Although the first great passion has faded, this isn't grand opera, in which lovers have to die. "The Umbrellas of Cherbourg" is more like a perfect pop song, in the French style: the disappointed lover survives to declare "*Je ne regrette rien*" and almost mean it.

Now that "The Umbrellas of Cherbourg" can again be seen as Demy intended it to be seen (the restoration, which he began shortly before his death, was completed by Varda with help from Legrand), it's hard to avoid thinking that the movie's reputation as a sentimental, crowd-pleasing novelty item is a gross injustice. And as you watch Deneuve's alert, sensitive performance it seems inconceivable that in the sixties she was often condescended to as merely an extraordinary camera object, cold and inexpressive. It's as if both the movie and its star were being punished for the miraculous simplicity—the sheer obviousness—of their beauty. In the context of the New Wave, Demy's accessibility and scrupulous craftsmanship were always anomalous: his method in "Umbrellas"—having the actors' movements determined by a pre-recorded score—necessarily precluded the kind of loose-limbed, improvisatory style that made other young auteurs' movies seem so fresh and liberating. Today's audiences might not be as conscious of the differences between Demy and his colleagues, and therefore might be better prepared to accept the idiosyncratic and highly wrought, but very real, imaginative liberation that "The Umbrellas of Cherbourg" proposes. The film comes now, as it did thirty-two years ago, out of an enchanted nowhere—out of Jacques Demy's dream of an ideal union between movies and ordinary life. It's been a long time since a movie has carried us away in a white Cadillac with the top down, and it was worth the wait.

IF there's anything that moviegoers are hungrier for than romance, it's comedy. David O. Russell's farcical road movie "Flirting with Disaster" has a snappy trailer and a promising cast, and the reviews have mostly been ecstatic, so the audience is primed for hilarity. The aura of funniness—the filmmaker's evident determination to make us laugh—creates a large reserve of good will, which Russell draws on heavily in the ninety minutes or so it takes him to tell his busy, eventful story. He taps out early. The giddy, we're-having-some-fun tone gets irritating when the one-liners are flat, the sight gags are dumb, and the comic situations build to predictable punch lines. Russell's script sets a thirtyish New York entomologist, Mel Coplin (Ben Stiller), who was adopted as a small child, on a cross-country search for his biological parents; he's accompanied by his wife, Nancy (Patricia Arquette), their newborn baby, and an efficient-looking but stunningly inept adoption-agency official named Tina (Téa Leoni). The central joke—not a bad one—is that Mel, like yuppies everywhere, still hasn't quite figured out what he wants to be when he grows up; fatherhood has panicked him into this sudden, desperate urge to acquire a genetic identity. Thanks to Tina's incompetence, Mel winds up as a puzzled passenger on a tour of older-generation life styles: each new "real" parent gives him a frightening glimpse of what it means to have a strong, invulnerable sense of self.

This fairly witty conceit sets up what should be an amusing contrast of performing styles: the young characters' vagueness and befuddlement is meant to play off the older people's fierce, forceful personalities. In practice, however, Mel, Nancy, and Tina are just dull and the oldsters are caricatures and not terribly original ones, at that. Mel's adoptive parents, played (expertly) by Mary Tyler Moore and George Segal, are nervous urban kvetches, who worry too much and talk too loud. One biological-mother candidate is a chirpy San Diego Reaganite (played by Celia Weston) with blond, beach-bunny twin daughters; she's all generosity until she discovers that Mel is not in fact her property, and then she turns as mean as a snake. A possible father, who also doesn't pan out, is a Michigan truck driver (played by the serial-killer-faced David Patrick Kelly): this character, representing Midwestern blue-collar life, proves to be a crude, scruffy, cackling bigot. The real parents, finally tracked down in Arizona, are a pair of superficially enlightened and profoundly devious ex-hippies named Richard and Mary Schlichting (Alan Alda and Lily Tomlin). When Alda and Tomlin show up, they look as if they might actually be able to save the movie with their hilarious improvised-sounding riffs on New Age smugness. But Russell destroys their rhythm by cutting away to the less interesting characters and, ultimately, by embroiling everyone in a series of shockingly corny mixups, designed to jack up the wackiness. In his vain attempt to inject hipness into some very tired comic notions, Russell shoots the slapstick scenes with a handheld camera, thus demonstrating conclusively that he has no idea what he's doing: the picture often plays like a "Seinfeld" episode filmed by a crew from "Homicide." "Flirting with Disaster" is as confused as its hero; unlike him, it never does find its identity. ♦

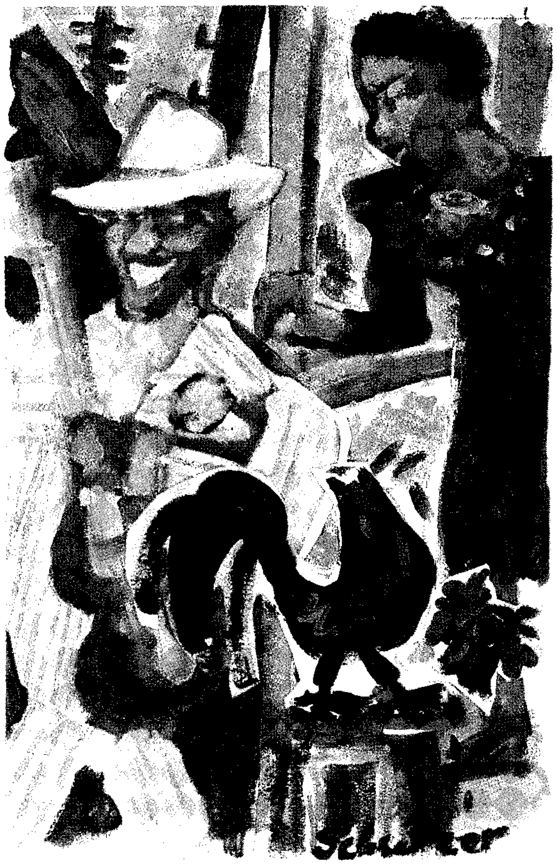
THE THEATRE

BLACK AND BLUES

"Seven Guitars," a new chapter in August Wilson's ten-play cycle.

BY JOHN LAHR

SOMEWHERE in the middle of August Wilson's exciting "Seven Guitars," which sends us stirring news of black life in the late forties, I found my mind wandering from the tribulations of his seven memorable characters to the blues. The show flashes back to the final days of a Pittsburgh blues singer named Floyd (Schoolboy) Barton. Before the play begins, Willie Dixon's "Little Red Rooster" and Arthur (Big Boy) Crudup's "That's All Right" rock the Walter Kerr, and when the lights come up, on Floyd's wake, a landlady named Louise (Michele Shay)—dwarfed by the production designer Scott Bradley's mammoth ghetto warrens of creosoted wood and brick and stone wedged between telephone poles and laundry lines—keeps the blues mojo working with a bawdy offer to the mournful assembly. "Anybody here wanna try my cabbage," she sings, "just step this way." What a pinched, desiccated, joyless century this would be without the blues' swaggering refusal to surrender. The seven guitars of the title are the seven characters whose straightforward story lines Wilson turns into beautiful, complex music—a funky, wailing, irresistible Chicago blues.



The folkways of a lost time and place: Keith David and Viola Davis in "Seven Guitars."

DENA SCHUTZER

"I take the same approach as a bluesman, the same ideas and attitudes," Wilson recently told me. "For instance, lines that say, 'I'm leavin' in the mornin', I'm gonna start out walkin', And take a chance I may ride.' I simply go back and look through that. Contained in the expression is your whole world view." He added, "When the old folks sang, 'Everything's gonna be all right,' it *was* all right, simply because they sang. They made it all right by their singing. They just changed their attitudes. The blues emboldened their spirits and enabled them to survive whatever the circumstance was."

Here, in a Pittsburgh back yard in 1948, Wilson is bearing witness to a pivotal, ironic moment in black American history, when African-Americans were poised between their greatest hope and their greatest heartbreak. "We had just gone off and demonstrated our allegiance and willingness to fight and die for the country," Wilson said. "We actually believed that

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things would be different, and that we would be accorded first-class citizenship. We came back after the war, and that was not true." In the high times and dashed dreams of "Seven Guitars," the seventh work in a ten-play cycle that will chronicle black experience in each decade of the twentieth century (his plays for the first decade of the century, the eighties, and the nineties still remain to be written), Wilson eloquently dramatizes this punishing contradiction.

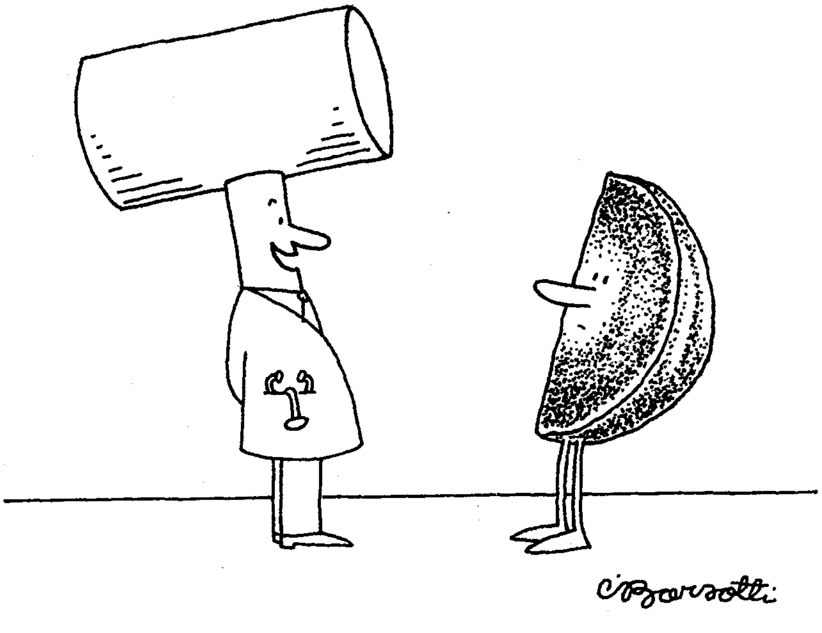
Opportunity is what Floyd carries in his pocket when he is conjured up before us in all his high-stepping, smooth-talking glory. Floyd has discovered that there's a record deal waiting for him in Chicago if he can just find the money to get his guitar out of hock and a ticket to ride. Keith David, as Floyd, gives the character a bravura air of confidence and cunning. Fresh from the workhouse, where he's done ninety days for vagrancy (the judge called his crime "worthlessness"), Floyd flaunts his prowess and his hope, trying to win back his shy, saturnine ex-girlfriend, Vera (Viola Davis), so he can take her to Chicago with him. He shows her a letter from Savoy Records. "Look at that. 'Mr. Floyd Barton,' " he says. "You get you a hit record and the white folks call you Mister." In one throwaway laugh line, Wilson catches a lifetime of second-class citizenship. But Floyd is ever hopeful. "It's different now," he tells Vera. "You get a hit record and you be surprised how everything change." What doesn't change for any of the black folk onstage, though, is their access to money. "You got to take the opportunity while it's there," Floyd says. Yet in order to seize his moment Floyd needs not only his own guitar but all his band's instruments, which are also at the pawnshop. The band has a hit record but nothing to play music with.

To finance his move, Floyd has to rely on his erstwhile manager, a white man called T. L. Hall. The plot point neatly incorporates Wilson's views on the failure of African-Americans to progress in American society. The playwright told me, "The thrust for integration and the lack of a relationship to banking capital meant that we could not continue to develop the economic base that we'd begun."

THE waste of talent is implied here by the inventive energy the characters bring to the ordinary activities of their stalled days. Wilson is writing an oral, not an economic, history of his time, and it is all the more profound and persuasive because it teaches through joy, not through reason. In a catalogue of song, superstitions, stories, homilies, and food, the folkways of a lost time and place are gorgeously reimagined. For instance, Floyd's harmonica player and good friend, Canewell (the superb Ruben Santiago-Hudson, whose every syllable of tall talk is etched with tenderness), explains how to test the sweetness of watermelons. "You don't thump them," Canewell, who has eyes for Vera, says. "You treat a watermelon just like you do a woman—you squeeze them." The drummer, Red Carter (the droll Tommy Hollis), is a portly repository of black legend, especially his own. He tells how he juggled affairs with seven women at one time: "I tried to move my Friday woman over to Sunday, but she got mad. My Sunday woman quit me and my Monday woman wanted to see me on Saturday. I got so confused I say the best thing for me to do was quit my job."

For these characters, work is hardscrabble, but fun isn't. Wilson makes a point of showing off their high spirits and their talent when, after some artfully engineered badinage, the band members find themselves making wonderful music out of nothing. Canewell produces a spare harmonica and makes it "talk"; Floyd bangs his beat-up wooden guitar; Red produces drumsticks and beats out time on a card table and the backs of chairs. It's one of several showstopping moments that Wilson uses to make larger, powerful points about the personalities onstage. During another such scene, everyone sits outside on a sweltering night listening intently to a radio broadcast of the Joe Louis–Billy Conn championship fight. Boxing is the crudest of Darwinian metaphors; but, if the black man can't always survive in the real world, here, at least, he's victorious. (To underline the dramatic point, Wilson has moved the date of the Louis-Conn bout from 1946 to 1948.) The group erupts in a frenzied dance to celebrate the Brown Bomber's knockout—a victory that must stand for the characters' own frustrated battles against the white man. Red tries to teach Vera "the Joe Louis Victory Walk," telling her, "Now just let it roll. You ain't got to worry about rocking it—it'll rock by itself." Vera, who is slow to kindle, finally burns. It's a fabulous, ecstatic moment, and Vera's heat prompts Floyd to pull a gun on Red. (All the men are armed for the tough world they hustle in.) Later, in the second act, the dance is reprised by Vera and the others to celebrate the band's own victory at a local club called the Blue Goose. Life, briefly, looks as if it might come good.

Floyd's obsession is to get to Chicago and his record contract. "More people means more opportunity," he says. A lot of the play's talk focusses on whether or not to go to the Windy City. Pittsburgh is a kind of way station in the migration from the rural South to the urban North, and the implications of this migration are what Wilson is trying to trap in all the



"Brazil nuts are my specialty."

banter. A barnyard rooster that belongs to a next-door neighbor and announces itself in the play's second scene becomes the subject of much comic abuse, and a symbol of the spiritual dilemma of this shifting population. "You ain't gonna find no rooster living next to you making all that noise in Chicago," Floyd says. To Canewell, who has told us earlier that he owes his name to his grandfather's cutting cane in Louisiana ("Otherwise my name would be Cottonwell," he jokes), the rooster is a totem of the painful past. "The rooster didn't crow during slavery," he says. "If you think I'm lying go and find you somebody from back in slavery time and ask them if they ever heard the rooster crow." One character refuses to participate in the rooster jive: the demented wise man Hedley (Roger Robinson), who makes his living selling chicken sandwiches, and honors his black heritage with the sure knowledge that "the white man walk the earth on the black man's back." Hedley speaks in riddles, and he dreams that one day his dead father's inheritance will come to him from the cornet player Buddy Bolden, whom his father idolized. Sometimes Hedley's actions seem as capricious as his pronouncements. After all the grousing about the rooster, Hedley bolts from the back yard and returns with the offending piece of poultry in his hand. "God ain't making no more roosters," he declares. "It is a thing past. Soon you mark my words when God ain't making no more niggers. They, too, be a done thing." He continues, "You hear this rooster you know you alive." Then Hedley wrings its neck and slits its throat. The chilling moment works as both a curse and a prophecy. Wilson told me, "Hedley's whole warning is 'If the rooster has become useless, then what about you? Maybe you'll become useless, too.' If you don't connect to the past, then you don't know who you are in the present. You may prove to be unworthy of the past."

When Floyd's manager is jailed for an insurance scam, Floyd finds himself between a rock and a hard place. "Everything can't go wrong all the time," he says quietly. "I don't want to live my life without. Everybody I know live without. I don't want to do that. I want to live with. . . . Floyd Barton is gonna make his record. Floyd Barton is going to Chicago." He seizes his opportunity in the only way left to him: he robs for it. One of his friends is killed. Wilson allows Floyd a moment of glory at the Blue Goose before making him pay for his actions. Hedley discovers Floyd counting his stolen cash in the moonlight. In his dementia, Hedley mistakes Floyd, in his white city suit, for Buddy Bolden, and claims the cash as his. They quarrel, and Hedley kills Floyd.

"THE odyssey of the African-American throughout the twentieth century has been one of loss and reclamation," Wilson told me. "It's about reclaiming those things which were lost during slavery." At Floyd's wake, Vera maintains that she saw him being taken up to Heaven, but his death is a necessary part of what Wilson sees as the African-American reclamation of "moral personality"—of taking responsibility for one's actions. "I always say that if the African who arrived chained and malnourished in the hold of a three-hundred-and-fifty-foot slave ship is still, after four hundred years, chained and malnourished, then it can't be anybody's fault but his," Wilson told me.

When Wilson was growing up, in the Hill district of Pittsburgh in the late forties and fifties, his parents used to admonish him, "Don't go out there and show your color," but Wilson has dedicated his life and his art to doing just that: making a spectacle of blackness. No other theatrical testament to African-American life has been so popular or so poetic or so penetrating. In Wilson's long and successful partnership with the director Lloyd Richards, whose hand has guided this play through a protracted and difficult birth, he has won two Pulitzer Prizes, for "Fences" (1987) and "The Piano Lesson" (1990). If there were any justice in these things (there isn't), "Seven Guitars" would make it a hat trick. No one else—not even Eugene O'Neill, who set out in the mid-thirties to write a nine-play cycle and managed only two plays—has aimed so high and achieved so much. On Broadway, where shows are filled with bogus recipes for happiness, it's thrilling finally to hear a useful one. "You get you about three pounds of turnips and about three pounds of mustard," Canewell says, describing his method of making turnip greens. "I like to mix them together. . . . Put you in a little piece, about a quarter pound of salt pork in there with them. Turn the fire way down real low and let them cook up about six hours. Throw you some red pepper seeds in there first. Cook that up and call me when it get done." Me, too. ◆

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MOODEST PROPOSALS

BY CHRISTOPHER BUCKLEY

NEW DELHI, April 2 (Reuters)—A Hindu group in India offered today to shelter British cows threatened with slaughter because of mad cow disease.—*The Times.*

"Surely the solution to Cambodia's mine problem is here before our very eyes in black and white."—*A Cambodian newspaper, quoted in the Times, on using British cows to detonate unexploded land mines.*

BERLIN, N.H.—Republican Presidential candidate Patrick J. Buchanan today proposed that the United States import the 4.7 million British cows affected by mad-cow disease and deploy them across the U.S.-Mexican border to deter illegal immigrants.

DALLAS—Ross Perot today attacked the idea of deploying cows along the U.S.-Mexican border, saying that hungry illegal immigrants would be likely to "take a bite out of 'em on the way over and then we'd end up with tens of thousands of crazy Mexicans running around. I ask you," he told a crowd, "is that the America we want to leave for our grandchildren?"

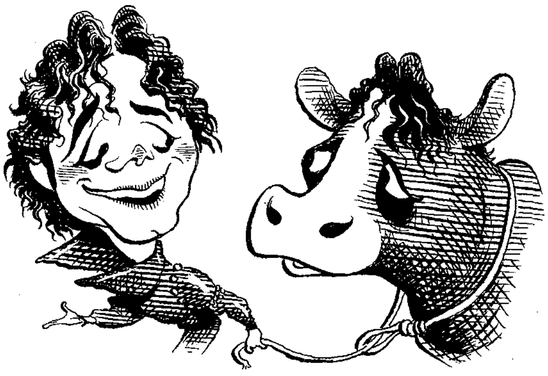
FAIRFAX, Va.—The National Rifle Association today announced that it has offered to send its entire 3.3-million membership over to England to assist with its massive cow-culling effort. N.R.A. executive Wayne LaPierre said that if Britain did not have such stringent gun-control laws "they'd have been able to nip this problem at the start." He called on Congress to immediately repeal the ban on some types of assault rifle, including the .50-calibre Elsie Eliminator, so that the membership can "do the job right."

BOGOTÁ—Luis Alfonso Maquilon Amaya, a head trafficker for the Cali cocaine cartel, is reportedly trying to buy up all 4.7 million mad British cows on the black market. According to sources here, the plan is to stuff the cows full of cocaine and ship them to the United States. "Normally we have problems with customs when the bags break inside and the animals make a big scene," a source said. "But a *vaca loca* isn't bothered too much by even a couple of kilos in its bloodstream."

CANBERRA—The Australian government has said it will take delivery of all British mad cows. Trade Minister Tim Fischer said that the plan is to "float the cows off beaches so the sharks will eat them instead of tourists and the odd Prime Minister."

LOS ANGELES—Entertainer Michael Jackson and Saudi Prince Al Waleed Bin Talal announced today that they will create a theme-park home for all British cows afflicted with mad-cow disease. Stroking a cow's forelock as he spoke at the press conference in a barely audible whisper, the singer would not provide details of the amusement park or venture to explain why people would pay to be with millions of mad cows other than to say it would be "really, really wonderful."

WASHINGTON—Mayor Marion Barry today offered to use Britain's mad cows to fill District of Columbia potholes. The one problem, he said, is that there are only 4.7 million cows, and the District has 7.8 million potholes.



JORDAN, Mont.—The F.B.I. plans to stampede more than four million mad British cows in an effort to force the Montana Freemen to end their standoff, it has been learned. F.B.I. director Louis Freeh declined to comment on reports that British Hercules C-130 cargo planes have been observed dropping large numbers of cows by parachute near the standoff area.

BEIJING—China announced today that it plans to conduct "amphibious mad-cow exercises" in the Taiwan Strait. Secretary of State Warren Christopher warned China's leadership that the U.S. viewed the development "seriously."

NEW YORK—The Council of Fashion Designers of America said today that it would use British mad cows in runway shows. "Fashion recognizes its responsibility to help," said C.F.D.A. director Fern Mallis. "The cows are very contemporary, they look great in leather, and their eyes have the look."

HOLLYWOOD—A group of actors and actresses has called on Prime Minister John Major to "stop the slaughter" of British mad cows and "do something positive instead, like vaccinate them or whatever."

"We feel the government hasn't done enough," said Liam Neeson. Neeson said he has felt sympathetic toward British cows ever since the filming of the movie "Rob Roy," in which he escaped from soldiers by hiding inside the carcass of a large, decomposing Hereford. The group, Creativity United to Denounce the Slaughter (CUDS), plans to distribute lapel udders with ribbons.

OAK BROOK, Ill.—The McDonald's Corporation announced today its plans to introduce a new line of sandwiches next month called Mad Macs. ♦

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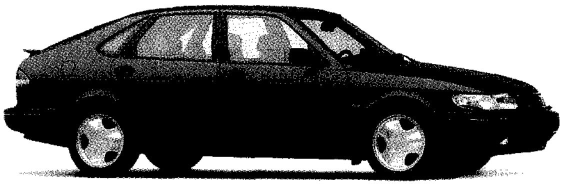

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